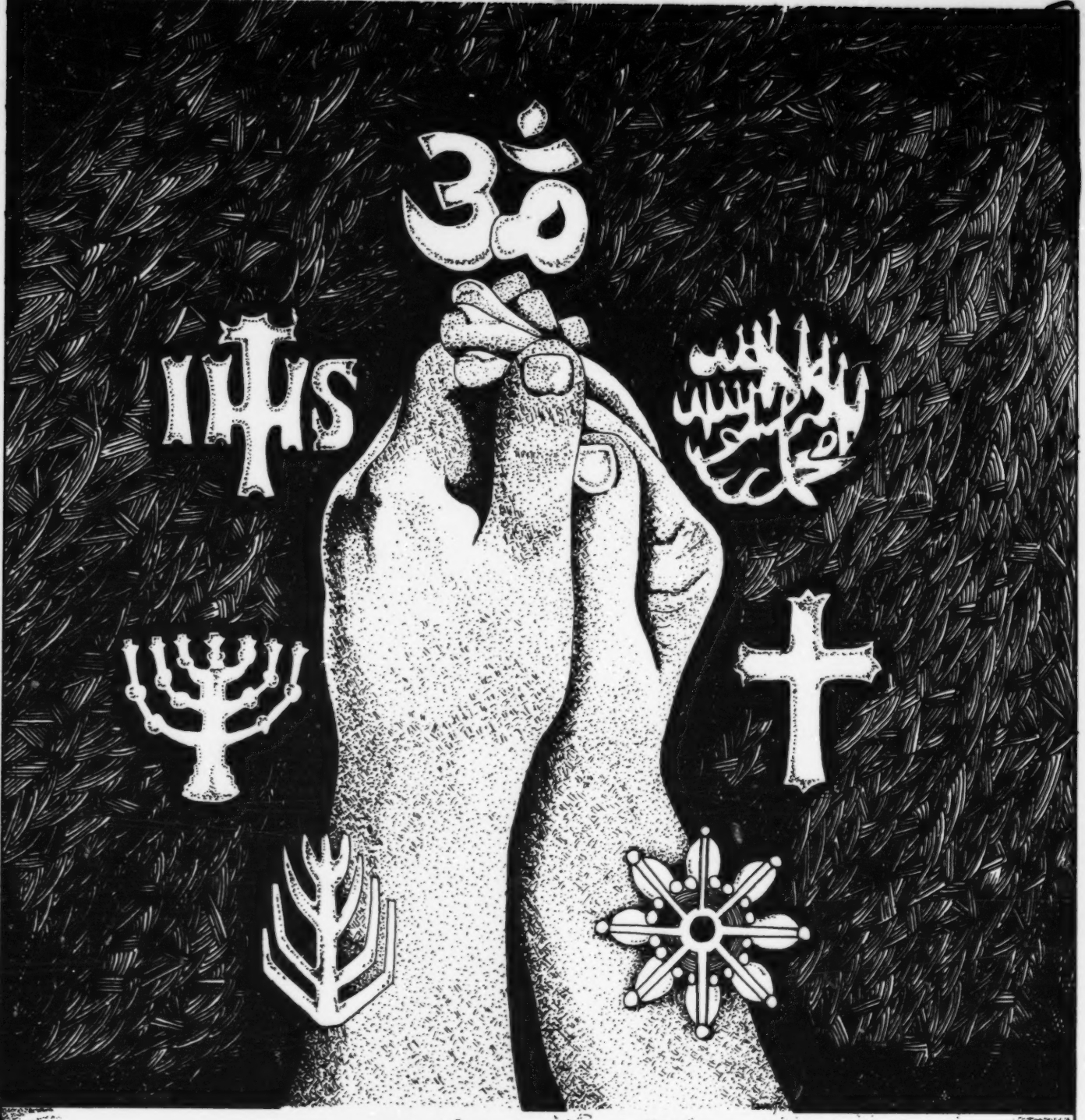

TRADITIONS IN TRANSITION

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World Religions in the Context of Western Canada

Edited by
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Alberta Culture
Provincial Museum of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta
1982

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The papers in this volume were presented in a lecture series held at the Provincial Museum of Alberta from October to December, 1980. This series was sponsored by Alberta Culture, the Provincial Museum of Alberta and made possible through a grant from the National Museum of Canada, Special Activities Assistance Programme. It gives us great pleasure to acknowledge the National Museum of Canada, its financial assistance and encouragement of the project.

In August of 1979, the Minister of Culture, Hon. Mary J. LeMessurier, graciously opened the Spiritual Life-Sacred Ritual gallery. This was the Provincial Museum's first permanent gallery to discuss a theme in the cultural life of Alberta's settlement peoples. The original lecture series along with this volume were generated to augment the theme of worship and rite explored in the gallery.

It was the intention of the editor to bring a scholar working on a specific religious tradition and a devotee of that tradition together for an evening of lectures and public discussion. The resulting papers generally survey the tradition and discuss the ultimate concern associated with the faith. A discussion of the implications for religious life in the context of pluralism and secular cultural forms runs throughout the presentations. Although ecumenical concerns were not at issue in the shaping of this volume, there does emerge a general concern, a shared dilemma, about the implication for traditional relgious practise of the modern cultural context.

Working with the contributors to this volume has been a singular pleasure for the editor. All the contributors deserve our warmest thanks for making the lecture series and this publication congenial and a source of insight into the structure and meaning of religious life. Our appreciation and understanding of the practice of each faith, each tradition, has been enhanced by their generous contributions.

The editor wishes to express his appreciation to Dr. John Lunn, Director of the Provincial Museum, Eric Waterton, Head Curator of Human History, and Charles Williams, Supervisor of Public Programs, for facilitating the administration of this project.

David J. Goa
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HAROLD G. COWARD

THE HINDU TRADITION

There are about 400 million Hindus in India, Africa, Indonesia, and the West Indies. Unlike such religions as Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism, Hinduism has no single founder and no missionary drive to convert others to its beliefs.

Hinduism's historical record dates back more than four thousand years, to before the beginnings of Judaism or Christianity. Very early — between 1,000 B.C. and 2,000 B.C. — it reached a relatively high stage of philosophical, religious, and psychological development, which it has sustained to the present day. It has stood the test of more than four millenia of spiritual thought and experience. Though peoples of differing races and cultures have poured into India from the very dawn of history, Hinduism has maintained its supremacy. Even missionary religions — Islam in the middle ages and Christianity in the last 300 years — backed by political and economic power have not been able to coerce the large majority of Indians out of their Hindu beliefs. Hindu culture and religion possess a unique vitality which seems lacking in other faiths and which has enabled it to become the religious foundation for over half the world. China and Japan, Tibet and Siam, Burma and Ceylon — all look to India as their spiritual home. Buddhism was a reform movement developing out of Hinduism and holds many basic beliefs in common with Hinduism.

The West has recently begun to feel the impact of the unique power of Hindu spirituality. Think, for example, of the impact of Indian music on Western folk and rock groups, the arrival of gurus such as the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi with his transcendental meditation, and the activities of such Hindu sectarian cults as the Hare Krishna movement. In addition there is the broad appeal of yoga as a physical and psychological discipline.

On philosophical and theological levels, Hinduism appeals to many in the West today because of its open-minded tolerance and acceptance of virtually any religious practice or any belief about God. The hindu thinker looks at other religions this way:

> If the whole race of man, in every land, of every color, and in every stage of culture is the offspring of God, then we must admit that, in the vast compass of providence, all are being trained by his wisdom and supported by his love. When the Hindu found that different people aimed at understanding and worshipping God in different ways, he generously recognized them all and justified their place in the course of history.[1]

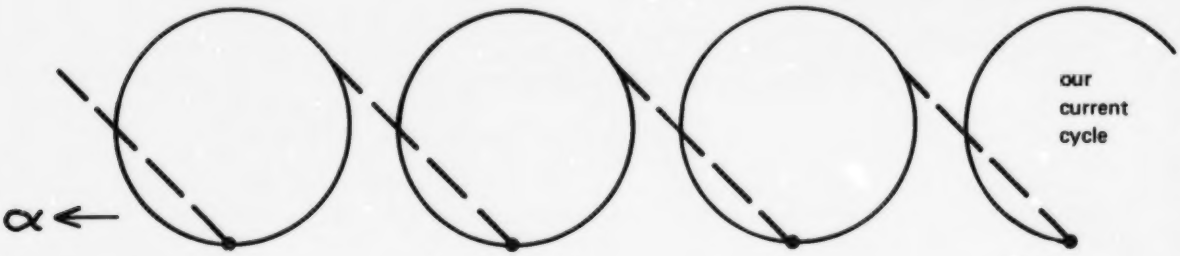
In the Hindu view, each religion's picture of God, be it the Canadian Indian's Gitchie Manitou, the Moslem's Divine Commander, or the Christian's Loving Father, is a representation of a true aspect of God and therefore should be accepted. That various descriptions of God conflict does not prove them wrong; rather, it shows that each picture is an imperfect, incomplete representation of the reality of God to which all our ideas and descriptions point. For the Hindu, God is the one supreme universal spirit which underlies all human, animal, and material life, and towards which all religious feelings and theology strive. No religious description can ever fully define or completely conceptualize God. Rather, we can come to know God best and most fully when we pass beyond words and actions and realize in the heights of our experience that our spirit or soul is at one with God.

Everything I have said so far about the Hindu view of God probably seems fairly reasonable and acceptable to Westerners. One might well ask where the unique belief is that so sharply distinguishes Hinduism from our Western way of thinking. In attempting to understand the distinctiveness of the Indian perspective we must first be aware of our own stereotypes and presuppositions. These we must put aside. We must make every effort to put ourselves inside the Hindu's skin, to see and feel the universe as he or she does. Only then will we have a sense of the different way in which the universe appears to a Hindu. The uniqueness of the Hindu world-view centers on four important concepts: *anadi* (beginninglessness); *karma* (the moral law of life); *samsara* (rebirth); and *moksha* (freedom or release). The basic Indian world-view assumes a beginning cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, leading us to the desire for release from this endless round of suffering. Let us look briefly at each of these concepts.

Anadi: (The beginninglessness of the universe)

Hindu thought has no concept for the creation of the universe. The Jewish and Christian idea, found in Genesis, is that in the beginning there was nothing and that out of this nothing God created the universe and all life. The Hindu assumes that the universe and life have been going on without beginning. The term "anadi" means "no birth". When challenged by the Western view, the Hindu asks: "How can you create something out of nothing? Are there any examples of creating something out of nothing in our everyday experience? One thing changes into another, energy transforms itself, but there is never an example in our experience of something coming out of nothing. Nor can God be thought of as using a part of himself to make creation, because then he would be using himself up, and after a period of time God would be totally annihilated in creating the universe.

This is simply unacceptable. Instead we should think of everything — the universe, God, scripture, ourselves — as having existed without beginning."



Within the Hindu view that the universe exists without beginning is an idea of cycles of creation with relative beginnings. Each cycle begins from a seed state, grows, flowers, withers, and dies. But, just as a seed flowers, drops seed, and dies, so too each cycle sees a seed dropped off which begins the next cycle of creation. That seed state sprouts, flowers, withers, and dies, dropping off yet another seed state which in its turn grows, flowers, withers, and dies. The universe we are now experiencing is in one such relative cycle of creation.

According to the Hindu view, we are in the dying or withering stage of that cycle. This does not lead to despair, because as this cycle disintegrates a new seed will be cast off and form the basis for a fresh start for the universe. If we trace the process back to previous cycles of creation we never come to a first cycle, because the seed for any cycle has come from the cycle before it. Brahman, manifesting as Ishvara, the creator, is the seed of consciousness that speaks forth the scriptures out of the seed state at each relative beginning of the universe.

Karma, the moral law

"Karma" is a term with which we are more and more familiar, but it is very poorly understood. Everything you do and every thought you think is like an arrow released from a bow. It must continue until it strikes something. This is the basic idea behind karma. "You reap what you sow," could well be the motto for karma. Each of us is responsible for our own destiny. If we do good actions and think good thoughts, this will establish the probability of a good future for us. On the other hand, if we do evil deeds and think evil thoughts, this will probably produce suffering for us.

In psychological terms, karma is simply a description of the unconscious processes which were formulated within the last century in the West by Freud. The unconscious is full of potentialities which impel us into actions, either good or evil. We think of these potentialities as being desires, drives, impulses. Where did these potentialities come from? The doctrine of karma teaches that when we act or think, a memory trace or seed is laid in our unconscious which will predispose us to that same kind of action or thought in the future.

Note that in Indian psychology thoughts are every bit as real as actions. Indeed, in a sense they are more real and important than actions, because we usually think before we act and so the thought is the precursor of the action. Note also that karma is neither deterministic nor mechanistic. A karmic seed laid in the unconscious does not force us to perform or act or think a thought, it simply predisposes: it gives an impluse or desire to perform an action or think a thought. We still have the freedom to go along with that action or thought.

Karma can be either good or bad. If we have performed a good action or a good thought, a memory trace is laid down in our unconscious which will predispose us to do a similar good action or think a similar good thought in the future; similarly with bad deeds and thoughts. Our unconscious, therefore, is a great storehouse of karmic memory traces, or seeds *(biji)*, which are stored, waiting for the set of circumstances that will encourage them to sprout forth as a desire or impluse. Just as the seed waits for the right conditions of warmth and moisture to sprout, so also the karmic memory trace waits for the predisposing conditions in the environment to be present before it sprouts and creates a desire or potentiality for action. It is then up to our free choice whether we do that action or think that thought again and so reinforce the behavior patterns of our past activities.

Habit is simply a karmic pattern repeated and reinforced over and over again, moving from a condition of relatively easy choice to one which is more established and produces a stronger impulse within us. But no matter how strong the habit or desire, we can always, by an act of will, exercise our free choice to negate it. When a karmic impulse is negated, the impulse withers and dies without leaving a seed or memory trace in our unconscious. Therefore, either good or bad karmas — in the sense of memory traces in our unconscious — can be reinforced or be removed through our free choice.

In karmic theory we are totally responsible for ourselves. We cannot provide excuses for our behavior or thoughts by appealing to our being born into a bad family, or having had ineffective teachers, or being generally

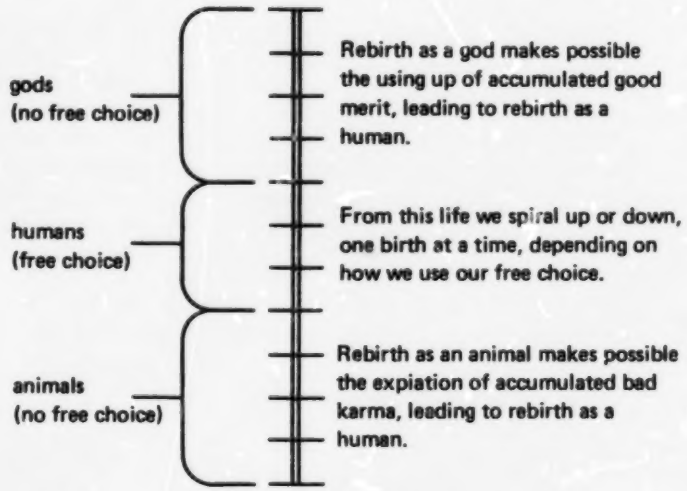
unlucky in life. In the theory of karma all our impulses are a result of our own previous action. We and we alone are the ones who are responsible. We alone exercise free choice and make the karma that will influence ourselves in the future.

If we understand karmic theory correctly, all the desires and impulses we feel now can be accounted for by the actions or thoughts of life since our birth. But what about impulses or desires which seem completely out of character with the way we have lived since birth? What about that particular lustful impulse which cannot be traced to a previous action or thought in this life? How can that be accounted for? This is explained by the third major Indian concept.

Samsara (rebirth)

In the Indian world-view each person is reborn again and again, according to his karma. Many of those surprising thoughts and desires we find when we analyze our unconscious impulses come from thoughts and actions of previous lives. What we are experiencing in this life is the consequence of all the good and bad actions and thoughts of our previous lives. And the actions and thoughts which are freely willing in this life are laying down predispositions which will affect us in our future lives. Karmic impulses from this life span all our previous lives, going backwards indefinitely, result in a gigantic store house of karmic impulses in our unconscious — a huge granary full of seeds waiting to burst forth in new action.

If I live a good life and build up good karmas, I will be reborn in the next life as a better person or, if I reach the top of the karmic scale, as a god. On the other hand, if I live an evil life and pile up bad karma in my unconscious — which accompanies my soul after death — I will be reborn as an evil person or, if I reach the very bottom of the karmic scale, as an animal.


gods
(no free choice)
humans
(free choice)
animals
(no free choice)
Rebirth as a god makes possible the using up of accumulated good merit, leading to rebirth as a human.
From this life we spiral up or down, one birth at a time, depending on how we use our free choice.
Rebirth as an animal makes possible the expiation of accumulated bad karma, leading to rebirth as a human.

The karmic balance in our personality at death determines the state or level at which we will be reborn. Through our free choice in this life we are able to raise or lower this balance so that we are reborn either further up or further down the scale. The moment of death acts like a banker's balance. Our karma, good and bad, is weighed and automatically determines the level at which we will be reborn. Rebirth occurs almost immediately and is about the same as going to sleep at night and waking up in the morning, only from one life to the next.

If we live this life acting only on good impulses and letting bad impulses wither and die, then our karmic balance will be changed for the better, and we will be reborn one step up the ladder. If in the next life we again act on the good and negate the evil, we will be reborn a further step up. Through countless lives we can spiral upwards until we finally reach the level of the gods. There we experience the honor of being mayor for a day, as it were — the honor of sitting in the place of Indra and the enjoyment of exercising the cosmic function of Indra until our good merit is exhausted. Gods do not have free choice, and life as a god lasts only until our merit is exhausted. Then we are automatically reborn at a saintly human level. If, on the other hand, in successive lives we continue to act on the bad and negate the good, we spiral downwards until we are reborn as an animal. Like gods, animals do not have free choice. Only humans have free choice. Animals can do nothing except follow their instincts and experience the suffering that such instincts produce. Bad karma, accumulated from evil actions

of previous lives, is expiated through the animal's suffering. When the bad karma has been expiated, one is reborn as a human and has the free choice to try once more to work oneself up the ladder.

This helps us understand why Hindus are vegetarians. Animals are beings the same as you and me. They are simply in a different karmic state. To kill and eat an animal would be the same as cannibalism. This is the basis for the great reverance for life that is found in the Hindu tradition.

So life goes on: a merry-go-round of birth, death, and rebirth. This had been going on without beginning and, because of karma, apparently without end. It tires one just to think about it. If you think about it seriously, you might wonder if there isn't a way off this wheel of life, this merry-go-round of one existence after another. One might shout, "Stop the world I want to get off". When you look for a way out of this cycle, that is where Hinduism and Buddhism begin. Hinduism gives one answer, Buddhism another, as to how to obtain release. The Hindu answer is called "moksha".

Moksha (release)

Moksha is release from the merry-go-round of birth, death, and rebirth. You don't have to seek moksha. If you are quite happy with the daily round of sensual pleasures and material enjoyments then you can lay away new karmas and assure yourself of future lives. But eventually you will want out.

The three ways of obtaining release are the yoga of knowledge, the yoga of action, and the yoga of devotion. The yoga of knowledge involves psychological techniques developed by the Hindu holy men to control their actions and deeply analyze their unconscious. They thereby clean our karmic obstructions from previous lives and are able to discover the real nature of their true selves. The true self has been covered by karma through endless cycles of rebirth and needs the purging action of the yoga of knowledge to be revealed. This is the true basis of all Hindu yoga. It is not so much a physical exercise as a purifying of the mind. When all karmic obstructions have been removed, the true self shows itself to be nothing other than Brahman, or God. The goal of knowledge, therefore, is the experience of union with the Divine.

The yoga of action requires that no matter what one's duty is in life — that of a garbage collector, teacher, doctor, or mechanic — that duty is done with no thought for oneself or for the benefit or suffering that one experiences in fulfilling it. By doing one's duty as a dedication to the Lord, a kind of inner purification takes place. Karmas are removed, the inner self again stands revealed as none other than the Lord, and release is achieved. The key to the yoga of action, then, is the doing of one's everyday worldly duty without any thought for reward, benefit, or fame that one may obtain from it. One's duty is done without desire and with dedication to God.

The yoga of devotion requires that one say one's prayers, chant the scriptures, and meditate on the image of the Lord with such intensity that inner karmic obstructions are burned up and the Lord is revealed within consciousness. For the average person in India the great power of the way of devotion is that, while the yoga of knowledge requires a high level of education and time to spend in yoga practice, the yoga of devotion can be done by anyone regardless of caste, color, sex, and so on. All that is required is willingness to surrender oneself completely in devotion to the Lord. That surrender brings grace from the Lord that burns up karmic obstructions and results in full release or communion.

Regardless of which path is followed, the end is the same. Release comes only when we get behind the biological, material, and egotistical desires of our everyday existence and discover the true nature within ourselves. When we do, we realize that true self is not the ego, which is subject to pains and pleasures, but a spiritual soul *(atman)* which is at one with God. This is the meaning of the great Upanishadic statements: "that thou art," "you are God," and "consciousness is God." When this truth is experienced, one realizes that all worldly desires and anxieties are meaningless and unreal and that the only reality is that of the Divine. That same God which is the absolute spirit behind all religions and on which the universe depends, that God is the essence of one's inner self. Realization of that is release for the Hindu.

The importance and function of Hindu scripture

The principal Hindu scriptures are the Vedas, comprised of the Vedic hymns — poetic statements of praise by holy men who have seen the truth of Brahman and have tried to put that truth into words which would help others attain the same vision. The Vedic hymns praise Brahman as manifested in the forms of different gods. The second portion of the Vedas is the Brahmanas. The Brahmanas are statements of ritual activity based on truths revealed in the original Vedic hymns: they are composed to provide the basis for Hindu ritual. The third main section of the Vedas is the Upanishads. Just as the Brahmanas establish the basis of ritual for the masses, so the Upanishads provide the basis of the esoteric practice of those few who reach the higher levels of mystical purification. The Brahmanas bring out the ritual or surface aspects of the early Vedic hymns; the Upanishads go back to inner spiritual insight and seek to bring that out. Like any good poem, a Vedic hymn can be understood on different levels: the surface level of the Brahmanas provides a basis for ritual activity, while the deeper inner spiritual level of the Upanishads provides the basis for the knowledge of the oneness of the universe with Brahman. The basic teaching of the Upanishads is found in the equation of Brahman with the spiritual soul. The spirit of God that we

see in the world and that we experience deep within our being is none other than the spirit of the one eternal Brahman.

While the Vedas are the primary scripture for Hinduism, a secondary scriptural source is the Bhagavad Gita. It is perhaps the more commonly known scripture to educated Hindus as well as to the Western world. Where the Vedas are the basic revelation from God given at the beginning of each cycle of creation, the Bhagavad Gita is a revelation which comes once disintegration and decline are underway. It adds no new revelation, but presents the teaching of the Vedas in a way more suited to the increased karma and lessened understanding of people living in the final part of a cycle or creation. God incarnates in human form — through the form of an *avatar*, or divine incarnation — so as to teach people the truth in a more easily understood fashion. It is in the Bhagavad Gita that we find most clearly presented the three different paths to release.

Some central deities and their themes in Hinduism

Shiva is perhaps the most popular Hindu god and is a being of great complexity and variety. He is the paradigm of the meditating yogi, reducing the god of lust, Kama, to ashes when the latter tries to distract him from his lonely meditation. He is often associated with the destruction of the world, burning it up with his fierce dance, but he is also a great creative god, bringing new worlds into being with his dance. His most common symbol is the *lingam* (male sexual organ). Although he is often said to be a yogi, in many myths he is also a husband and consort. Thus he is, with his wife and children, also the model for domesticity. In short, he sums up many aspects of the religious life demanded of Hindus: to become a householder and have children, and to renounce the world and seek release.

Vishnu is another extremely popular deity in Hinduism. He is usually associated with creation but in Vaishnavite myth he too destroys the world at the end of every cycle. He is the source of several avatars. These incarnations descend to the world and keep it from falling into chaos. Because of the emphasis in Vishnu mythology on his saving character, Vishnu is almost invariably seen as a positive, peaceful and benign God. He performs yeoman service for man, particularly for his devotees. It is around Vishnu and his avatars that the idea of bhakti *(devotion)* develops. This devotion is exemplified best in the avatar Krishna.

Krishna has a long history in Hinduism. He proclaims and was Arjuna's charioteer in the Bhagavad Gita, but it is as a cowherd youth, a *gopa*, that he is most popular in India today.

The devotional approach to Hinduism is today the most popular approach of the Hindu masses in India. It is easy and open to all. It also embodies the great genius of Hindu theology: God is one but can be manifested, worshipped, and experienced in whatever form appeals most to the worshipper. To a male, God made manifest himself in the form of Shiva, the Creator, or of Vishnu, the Divine Father. A woman might prefer the form of Durga, the Divine Mother. A young person might prefer Krishna, the Divine Lover. These gods are simply different aspects of the one eternal Brahman. Through devotion to the most appealing manifestation of Brahman, the worshipper is drawn to experience the absolute.

Rita and dharma in Hinduism

Hinduism has the capacity to absorb and maintain within itself apparently conflicting traditions. Within it we see major conflicting streams of thought: the Vedic, which leads into legalistic Hinduism; and the yogic, also coming out of the Vedic, but leading into mystical Hinduism. *Rita* is located in the legalistic stream of thought and may be loosely understood as cosmic order. *Dharma*, or ultimate concern, is also found within legalistic Hinduism, related to proper performance of ritual activity. Within mystical Hinduism, dharma is the ultimate concern for release. Let us look at each of these in more detail.

In the Rig Veda, *rita* refers to order and *dharma* to law. In Hindu tradition creation is understood as the evolution of order out of a pre-existing state of chaos. In the Rig Veda (10:190) order emerges from chaos, but exactly how is left a mystery. The possibility of a return to chaos is left open in the hymn to creation. The etmylogical root of "dharma" means "to support", or "to hold up". Therefore, dharma (law) and rita (order), are mutually related terms in Vedic thought. The responsibilities of dharma involve us in two realms: sacrificial ritual, as described in detail in the vast and tedious Brahmanas; and the social aspects of life, as fully described in the Dharma Shastras, the most important of which is The Laws of Manu.

Ritual activity maintains rita inasmuch as the gods are the results, not the instigators, of rita. They are the defenders of rita, acting on behalf of order, but to sustain it they need the help of ritual activity. Through ritual activity we feed and support the gods and thus bring in dharma, or support. All of this is related to everyday life, where we do little ritual actions to inject a sense of order into society, as when we say "Good morning", open doors for each other, or shake hands.

Socially, the Dharma Shastras give basic support to the caste system. The caste system is perhaps best understood as the division of society into a system of *varnas* (sacred classes). There are four main varnas: the *brahmin*, made up of priests; the *kshatriya*, warriors; the *vaishya*, merchants; and the *shudra*, peasants. One is

born into the caste that one is to occupy for life. Sacred law ordains that one fulfills one's dharma by doing one's caste duty. For example, we find in The Bhagavad-Gita (3:35), "It is better to do one's own duty poorly than to do someone else's duty well." People no longer doing their duty or observing their caste properly is a signal of reduction in order and of the approach of the end of a cosmic cycle.

We can also think of dharma and rita in terms of the mystical tradition as we find it in the Upanishads. The Upanishadic *rishis* (seers) do not care much for the legalistic aspect and often give clear criticism of the ritual approach. In the view of Upanishadic rishis, dharma is really a striving for the mystical state of reality. As we find in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, "Whoever knows I am God, knows all." The individual gods are seen as enemies, and ritual is often portrayed as a dirty trick. The Upanishads also display a disregard for the caste system: seers may be from any caste, and women may be accepted into the realm of sacred knowledge. The mystical is seen to be a step above and beyond the ritual approach to dharma; thus, the two are not in conflict but are mutually complimentary. This is especially evident if one examines ritual and mystical activities of dharma in relation to the various stages of life.

In Hinduism four stages of life are accepted: student, householder, forest dweller, and wandering holy man. In the first two stages it is very important to obey caste laws, do one's duty, and perform prescribed rituals. In the student stage, one must study the *vaidas* (rituals) and learn to perform them properly. In the householder stage, one's duty involves marrying, raising a family, and performing duties to society appropriate to one's caste. The final two stages are those in which one who has progressed beyond the materialistic aspects of spiritual growth can withdraw from society and from caste duties and pursue the mystical path. In the forest stage there is limited withdrawal from caste and ritual performance. One no longer performs one's caste duties, and ritual activities are kept to a minimum. Instead, time is spent in worship, study, and meditation. In the final stage, *sannyassin*, one gives up all connection with society, cast, and family, and gives complete devotion to the mystical yogic practices.

In this way we see the great genius of Hinduism: it is able to understand dharma and rita in terms of caste and ritual duties at a lower level of spiritual realization, and yet understand the same dharma to involve transcendence of caste, family, and ritual activity, in a state of mystical union with Brahman, as the desired goal and final stage of release. The first understanding of dharma provides the foundation on which the second builds. Thus, what at first appear to be conflicting tendencies within the Hindu religion and society are, when seen in this light, shown to be complimentary and mutually supportive activities.

Hinduism, other religions, and secular culture

Unlike other religious traditions, Hinduism is not opposed to materialistic and sensuous experience: that is seen to be appropriate when one is in the householder stage of raising a family and performing social duty. It is in this sense that Hinduism has a unique capacity to absorb and transform all aspects of secular experience. When secular activity is performed during the householder stage, it is not antireligious; on the contrary, is necessary to perform one's religious duty. All forms of sensuous and worldly activity are subsumed within the householder stage and thereby given a religious context. The proper performance of secular duties enables one to maintain dharma and rita for both oneself and society.

Hindu theology also has a unique capacity to absorb and transform other religious traditions and philosophies. The theological view of Hinduism — that Brahman is one and that the various gods or religions are simply different pathways to that one Brahman — uniquely enables it to embrace within itself all other religious traditions. Buddhism, which began in India as a challenge to Hinduism, no longer exists there. Instead, the Buddha is seen as yet another manifestation of Brahman, alongside Shiva, Vishnu, Durga, and other manifestations of deity. Buddhism is seen as a practice that Hindus may follow on their way to union with Brahman. Similarly, when Islam and Christianity came to India, Hinduism embraced their teachings and so absorbed them. Jesus Christ is understood as an avatar of Brahman and thus is warmly embraced by Hindus. This view of Brahman as the ultimate divine being and all other saints and religious founders as its manifestations presents a very strong theological position which renders Hinduism virtually impenetrable to attack from without.

Perhaps the biggest challenge to Hinduism comes when it leaves the cultural context of India and seeks to exist as simply one religion alongside other religions in pluralistic cultures such as we find in Western Canada today. What Hindu parents, born and raised in India, learned of their religious tradition simply by osmosis, they cannot count on their children learning in Western Canada. Their children will more likely learn the values of Hollywood and the rock scene than the time-honored values of the Hindu tradition. The question posed is how to safeguard the revelations, teachings, and traditions of Hinduism when one exists as a minority group within the secular and materialistic Western culture. It seems clear that Hinduism has the genius to meet this challenge, but as yet the formula for accomodation has not been thoroughly worked out.

As is the case for believers in other religious traditions in contemporary Western Canada, Hindus will have to develop their own forms of religious education, cultural trainings, and spiritual diiscipline. In this regard the maintenance of the traditional languages of Hinduism along with the modern Indian languages is judged to be essential for maintenance of both Hindu culture and religion. Hindu culture and religion have within them unique

thought forms that do not occur in modern Western language. It is therefore essential that Hindu children be taught their Indian languages, to ensure that the forms of thought present in their religion and culture will not be lost. Along with this observation comes the ancient teaching of the grammarian tradition of India — that the thought forms of the ancient Sanskrit language, also present in modern Indian languages, have within themselves the power to purify one's consciousness and advance one's spiritual discipline. The time-honored religious practice of chanting *mantras* or verses of scripture, as prescribed by one's guru, not only helps to purify one's own consciousness but also helps to maintain cosmic order. If young people born into Hindu families in Western Canada do not learn Sanskrit or the Indian language from their parents and are unable to hear the scriptures in those languages and to chant mantras in the original language, it may well result in the death of the essence of the Hindu tradition in Western Canada.

The necessity of keeping myths and stories alive and performing ritual activities prescribed as appropriate to the student and householder stages of life must also be stressed. For this, properly trained priests and teachers will be needed for Hindu communities in Western Canada. Such teachers and priests are now often not available to the scattered Hindu communities. This problem must be overcome as soon as possible to ensure the continuation of Hindu culture and religion in Western Canada. Without teachers there is great danger that the Hindu tradition will lose its spiritual centre, even if its cultural shell is in certain formal ways retained. Cultural centres which offer Indian food, dances or music during certain festive times will not in themselves ensure the maintenance of the Hindu religious tradition. As the Vedas have always taught, there must be an unbroken succession of transmission, from teacher to student, and new teacher to new student. This is as important for Hindus living in Western Canada today as it was for orthodox Hindus living on the banks of the Ganges at the time of the Vedas. If this tradition is maintained, Hinduism will survive and flourish, whether it be in Western Canada, England, Europe, Africa, Indonesia, or on the Ganges itself. The physical location does not really matter, as long as the tradition and its foundation in the Vedas is retained and respected. This is the challenge to modern Hinduism in India today, where threatening influences from the Western world are appearing on the horizon. It is even more the challenge to Hinduism in Western Canada during the coming decades.

1. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *The Hindu View of Life* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1927), p. 20.

SUSUMU IKUTA

JODO SHINSHU BUDDHISM

I have divided my talk into two parts. I would like to talk about Buddhism in general, as an introduction, and then discuss Jodo Shinshu, the sect of Buddhism to which the Japanese people of Alberta belong.

Buddhism is defined as a religion taught by the historical Buddha, who came to this world in the sixth century B.C. His name was Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha. "Buddha" is a title given to a person who is enlightened. "Buddha" means "fully enlightened one", or "perfectly awakened one". The historical life of the Buddha cannot be separated from legend. According to scholars he was born as a prince of a ruling raja of the Sakya region. Therefore, "Sakya-Buddha" is the title that we sometimes call the historical Buddha.

Siddhartha was born around 560 B.C. His birthplace was found relatively recently, in 1896, in Nepal, by Dr. Fuhrer of the British Archaeological Society. He found a pillar, erected by the Buddhist king Ashoka, and inscribed: "Here the buddha, the sage of the Shakya was born".

Gautama Buddha led a very luxurious life as a child, but in spite of his surroundings he always meditated according to the religion. He meditated on such simple events as a bird picking a worm and questioned why living things have to kill each other. He was very philosophical inwardly. He married and had a son. At the age of 29 he saw an old man deadly ill with fever, and a corpse followed by a weeping mourner, and realized that man's life is transient. He renounced his position and went into the forests seeking enlightenment, leaving his wife and his son (both of whom eventually became his disciples). After following various ascetic practices and finding them not to be the way to enlightenment, he abandoned self-mortification and sat under what is now called the Bodhi tree, at a place called Buddhagaya. This remains a place of pilgrimage for Buddhists, and a grand, third-generation tree still grows there. Under this tree he said to himself, "May skin, sinew, and bone dry out as they will; my flesh and blood may dry in my body, but without attaining complete enlightenment I will not leave this seat" (Padhana Sutra).

On December 8, at the age of 35, he attained enlightenment. For seven days and seven nights he sat in deep meditation, weighing whether to go out into the world and preach what he had experienced, or whether to remain in the forest and keep it to himself. Out of compassion he came back to this world and gave the first discourse, which is called "Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Law", or "Foundation of the Kingdom of Right-eousness". So the Buddhist symbol is the eight-spoked wheel. It looks like a Rotary pin, and I've often been mistaken for a Rotary member when I wear it.

This first sermon laid the foundations of Buddhism: the four noble truths and eightfold path. The first truth is that suffering is everywhere. Suffering, in this case, does not mean just human suffering, but various conflicts and frictions in the world. Second, suffering arises out of desires and cravings. Third, there is a realm which is beyond this world of suffering. The fourth truth focuses on the paths leading to the cessation of suffering.

The means he gave were eight — called the eightfold path: right view, right thought, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right ethics, right mindfulness, and right meditation. That does not mean we should follow the paths in this order. If you have right view, you have all the rest; if you have right meditation, you have the rest.

According to legend, he gave eighty-four thousand sermons during his lifetime. He gave sermons to various peoples of different classes: philosophical discourses to the philosophers, and analogies and stories to farmers or merchants. He preached for 45 years and died at the age of 80. The last teaching of the Buddha was given at Kusinagara, where he passed away. He said: "Make a light of yourself; rely on yourself, and do not depend on anyone else. Make your teaching your life; rely on it. Consider your body and think on its impurity. Knowing that both its pain and its delight are like causes of suffering, how can you indulge in its desires? Consider your soul, and think of its transiency. How can you fall into delusion about it and cherish pride and selfishness, knowing that they must all end in inevitable suffering? Consider all substances. Can you find among them any enduring self? Are they not all aggregates that sooner or later break apart and are scattered? Do not be confused by the universality of suffering, but follow my teaching even after my death, and you will be rid of pain. Do this and you will indeed be my disciple" (Mahaparinibbana Sutra).

The same *sutra* (scripture) records his final message: "After my death, the *dharma* shall be your teacher. Follow the dharma and you will be true to me. During the last 45 years of my life I have withheld nothing from my teaching — there is no secret teaching and no hidden meaning. Everything has been taught openly and clearly. My disciples, this is the end. In a moment I will be passing into *nirvana*. This is my instruction." He then passed away.

Time in Buddhism

The main objective of a Buddhist is to turn away from illusion to attain enlightenment; and emphasis is placed on the present. Therefore, to Buddhists, who created our universe and how is not very important. We are here, what are we going to do about it? This is what is important. Buddhist scholars do not talk about creation or theology. The cause of our universe was asked by one of Buddha's disciples, and according to legend he maintained what we call noble silence. So the disciple asked again. Buddha remained quiet. When he was asked a third time, he gave a parable about a poison arrow: "If you were hit by a poison arrow, would you ask which direction the arrow came from, what the poison is made of, and so on and so forth, *before* you treat the wound? You would first extract the arrow and treat the wound. Then you could ask these questions. You are here now, what are you going to do about it This is the most important question. Once you solve this, the question of who created the universe will fall into place."

In general, the Buddhist looks on time as being relative. We have a tendency to look at time as the present, the past, and the future, so there has to be a beginning and there has to be an end. If we look at time in straight lines, this is inevitable. But the Buddhist does not look at time in this way. Time is relative, probably a motion in space. To illustrate our notion of time, we draw a circle and say, "Here is the beginning and also the end of the circle". A Buddhist probably would say the universe is self-creating. It is neither man-centered nor created by some supreme being.

A Buddhist does not accept one cause and will say that all things are dependent on each other for their existence: if one item is lacking, the universe will not be complete; at the same time, without the rest of the universe this single entity cannot exist.

The Principle of True Reality

Underlying this view of the universe is the principle of true reality. This true reality is sometimes translated as "suchness" or "thusness", to express the ultimate, the indefinable, the unnameable. Some call it Godhead. It is the true state of all things. It is timeless, without dimension or color, and beyond all our comprehension. Dynamically, it manifests in existing things, including ourselves. It could take a lofty form, it could take a depraved form, according to conditions and situations. From this point of view, Buddhism considers everything to participate in an undifferentiated whole. Buddhists say everything is one, not in contrast to the many or the whole, but simply in perfect oneness. The true state, looked at in this way, is without conditions. Yet, because it has no conditions, it may in turn be called a state with all conditions. Air, for example, could fill this room because it has no form. If you blow it into a balloon, it takes the shape of a ballon: it is without condition, and takes all other conditions. This is the state Buddhists are striving for. This is called Buddhahood, enlightenment.

Another way we could describe this thusness, true nature, or true state of reality is to know things as they are in themselves. To know in this sense differs from when we know about something. Our ordinary conscious mind is keyed to dualistic knowledge and thinking, so we have dichotomy: this, that; black, white; God, Satan; heaven, hell; we, they; enemy, ally. This is the way we divide. Even our language is made this way: subject, object. So we think or know always in contrast or in opposition to the self. Even when we reflect on ourselves, we split ourselves. We have an object there which is looked on by a subject here. There is a split.

As long as we have splits, we cannot see things as they are in themselves. We're looking at the universe through our eyes. We say this is a green blackboard; somebody else may say it's not green, it's yellow. If all of us were color blind, one person said this was green, and all of us said it was yellow, who is to say which is right? Are we all looking at the same blackboard? Would an insect crawling on top of a seat be looking at the seat as we would? Would he look at it as a playground? In size it would be different. So how we see things as they are in themselves becomes a problem.

If we could transcend this, if we could somehow see the blackboard as it sees itself, then we would be seeing reality. How can this be done? We cannot go and destroy the object. We can, however, do something about the subject — ourselves. Here the Buddhist concentrates on this subject through meditation and various other practices. The Buddhist would try to eliminate this dualistic world by trying to transcend it through abandonment of ego, or selflessness. What the Buddhist is trying to do is to negate the subject. If you negate the subject, what happens to the object? It is no longer the object as this subject would see it. I am looking at the chair, the object, but if I am no longer in existence, is that chair the way it is? By negation we transcend. This is enlightenment. Once the object can pull the subject into itself by its negation; it ends opposition. The subject, becoming nothing, affirms the object, and vice versa. So we find enlightened people saying the non-ego is ego, form is void, passion is Buddha, hell is Buddha. In one aspect, subject and object are a contradiction; from another aspect they are mutually correlated. Therefore it can be said that subject can be nothing, and yet be. A subject is not simply a subject but an object, and vice versa. This is called the state without any condition.

Paths to Enlightenment

One Buddhist sutra makes an analogy to a mountain with many passes to the summit. All who reach the summit will see the same moon. Some passes are very difficult; some passes are simple. Some people go up the mountain on a lift; some people want to climb a difficult path. It differs according to each one's temperament, but once we reach the top, we see the same moon.

Because of this basic teaching, we have many schools of Buddhism. In Japan there are probably over forty sects of Buddhism, all going their own way. The Buddha said: "Don't run around in the foothills. Find a path and walk that path until you reach the summit and can see the moon (enlightenment). Follow the teaching, the dharma. Don't look at the finger, look past the finger, look at the moon." Buddha never said, "Look at me."

Buddha sometimes is called "the instructor", and superficially his way can be divided into three paths. The first is the way of practice. In this the Buddhist would engage in various activities: in walking practice you may walk about twenty miles every day, through the mountain passes. In Japan this practice is still being observed by many followers of the tendai sect. There is another sect that walks around the Buddhist altar for 100 days, chanting the Buddha's name. You cannot sleep lying down, you just have to continue chanting. Another group, which is represented in the West by Zen, meditates to negate or become selfless. This meditation method is instructed by Soto Zen, Rinzai Zen, and others.

There is another group which is called "Pure Land", which stresses faith. "Faith" is not a good word for a Buddhist to use, because a Christian form of faith immediately comes to mind. Our faith is slightly different. It's called "Shingon". Translated directly, "Shin" is "true" and "gon" is "mind", so it means "true mind".

Generally we say this group belongs to the Jodo Shinshu or Pure Land school of Buddhism. "Jodo" means "pure land", "Shin" means "truth", and "shu" means "sect."

The early development of Pure Land Buddhism

The latest development of Pure Land Buddhism took place during the Kamakura Period (1185 - 1333) in the history of Japan. Six centuries after Buddhism was introduced to Japan, a religious genius named Shinran (1172 1262) brought the doctrine of salvation by Amida Buddha to its maturity. The name "Jodo Shinshu" was given to the sect that followed him.

The basic idea of a Pure Land presided over by Amida Buddha probably existed at the time Sakyamuni Buddha was alive in India. It remained relatively dormant for about 300 years, until the Mahayanistic emphasis on the Buddha's attribute of compassion came to the fore. Around that time basic texts for the Pure Land school appeared. Such texts as the larger and smaller Sukhavati Vyuha Sutra, and the Amitayur Dhyana Sutra were written to formulate the basis for reaching the Pure Land.

However, not until the teaching reached China was it consolidated into an organized school of Buddhism. In A.D. 403, Hui-Yuan (334 - 416), a great Buddhist scholar and translator, organized the White Lotus Society and originated the Pure Land sect.

Throughout the long history of the Pure Land school there had been numerous advocates of the teaching. Out of these, Shinran chose seven patriarchs whom he considered to have expressed the true spirit of Pure Land doctrine. There were two Indians, Nagarjuna and Vasubandu; three Chinese, T'an Luan, Tao Ch'ao, and Shantao; and two Japanese, Genshin and Genku.

Primal Will be Jodo Shinshu

The teaching of Jodo Shinshu grew out of *hongan*, the Original Vow or Primal Will of Amida Buddha — the Buddha of Infinite Light and Infinite Life. In the Sukhavati Vyuha Sutra this Buddha is described in detail. The sutra explains that Amida creating the Pure Land out of his boundless love for all beings. As Bodhisattva Dharmakara, a would-be Buddha struggling to attain Buddhahood, he willed that whosoever cherishes absolute faith in his 48 vows would be born into the Land of Purity. These vows being considered as the expression of Buddha's basic will, Jodo Shinshu Buddhism accepts them as the foundation of all reality. Furthermore, it interprets the eighteenth vow as Primal Will, summarizing the rest. This Will basically states the rest. This Will basically states Amida Buddha's unceasing desire to save all sentient beings and lead them to enlightenment.

This Will is considered by Jodo Shinshu Buddhism to be the foundation of all reality because Amida and his will are believed to be the body of Expediency arising in response to the spiritual needs of sentient beings from the ultimate, indefinable and unnameable reality. Amida, as the body of Expediency, makes his contact with sentient beings through the Primal Will.

The Primal Will states: "If, after my attaining Buddhahood, all beings in the ten quarters, who with sincerity of heart are holding faith and wishing to be born in my country, repeating my name perhaps ten times, are not so born, may I not attain the highest enlightenment."

The interpretations of this Primal Will by other sects of the Jodo school recognize several necessary conditions for salvation. Such attitudes as sincerity of heart, holding faith and wishing to be born, as well as the recitation of Buddha's name are so considered.

Shinran, on the other hand, accepts the entire Primal Will as the gift of Amida Buddha, placing no disciplinary conditions on being. Out of deep religious experience, Shinran states regretfully that if these conditions were placed as prerequisites to salvation, he would not qualify. To him, salvation is only possible if the Primal Will is entirely the work of Amida Buddha, with no condition attached.

Placing himself in the world of dichotamy, Shinran recognizes his relative, finite existence. Calling himself a "baldheaded fool", he asserts absolute incapability to attain perfect enlightenment by his own power. He acknowledges that the only way for him to enter the Pure Land, the realm of the absolute, is to be totally embraced by the power of Amida Buddha. It is through the grace of Amida alone that salvation is possible. This grace comes in the form of Amida's name, Namu Amida Butsu, an expression which fulfills the Primal Will.

Namu Amida Butsu

The call, Namu Amida Butsu, is composed of two parts: "Namu", meaning "complete surrender", and "Amida Butsu", meaning "the Buddha of Infinite Light and Infinite Life". "Light" and "Life" here express the principle that there is no corner of the human heart where his rays do not penetrate and not a moment in the human life when Amida is not urging man to rise above himself.

The transformation of being embraced by Amida Buddha takes place at the very moment when the desire to utter Amida's name occurs. To Jodo Shinshu devotees, this moment is a point of entry, that is, a point of sharing in the benefit of being embraced and not forsaken. Nevertheless, in spite of the recognition of this transformation, Shinran claims that the desire to utter Amida's name itself is the work of Amida Buddha, showing the ceaseless working of the Buddha long before man became conscious of the grace.

Such being the way Shinran accepted the Primal Will, the consciousness with which, or the attitude in which, devotees recite the name plays absolutely no part in their salvation. As snow is melted by the sun, regardless of its own volition, so Jodo Shinshu devotees are transformed and saved only by the grace of Amida Buddha. In salvation, man's self-power becomes absolutely useless. The name being the gift of Amida, and the desire to recite also being the work of Amida, it is clear that there is nothing other than Amida's grace at work. Devotees stand aside in religious awe as Amida fulfills his own Will.

Jinen: naturalness

This state of Amida fulfilling his Will is called jinen the state of naturalness or "so be it-ness". It is the state where nothing but Amida exists, in total splendor, and the grace of Amida — Namu Amida Butsu — becomes absolutely one with Amida. It is the state where even the awareness of salvation is no longer required.

So, when Shinran states: "as for me, Shinran, there is nothing left but to receive and believe in the teaching of the Venerable Master (Honen), that we are saved by Amida merely through the utterance of Amida's name. I am entirely ignorant as to whether the name is really the cause of birth in the Pure Land or whether it is the karma which will cause me to fall into *naraka* (hell)" (Tanni Sho, Chapter 2). Accepting the Amida in the role of jinen, neither birth in the Pure Land, nor falling into naraka are any longer a problem for Shinran.

In the daily lives of many Jodo Shinshu devotees similar expressions can be seen which show the devotees' willingness to let Amida fulfill his Will. Saichi, a Japanese wooden sandal maker, uttered to himself, "Oh Saichi how fortunate! No worry, no fetting, no saying the *nembutsu* (Namu Amida Butsu)." In letting Amida fulfill his Will even the recitation of Amida's name is no longer required. Standing before the Primal Will, Saichi finds himself in the joyful spirit of "let the Will be done."

Anjin Ketsujo Sho (On the Final Settlement for Peaceful Mind), an important treatise on the faith of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, mentions a hindrance and therefore a gap created by so-called good acts of devotees. Warning that even the very act of reciting the Amida's name, when colored by the idea of selfhood, can lead to fundamental separation between Amida and his devotees, the text reminds devotees not to interfere with the working of the Primal Will. For in the Primal Will of Amida there never was a gap.

Another well-known Jodo Shinshu devotee, Oyuki, also illustrated this spirit of jinen in an episode with her fellow devotee, Genshichi. Hearing that Oyuki was a true Jodo Shinshu devotee, Genshichi travelled several hundred miles to receive her instruciton on the matter of faith. He stayed at her home for several days, begging her to give instructions, but to no avail. During the stay Oyuki did not mention a word on the matter of faith. Feeling rejected and disappointed, Genshichi decided to leave. Just as he was departing, Oyuki came up to him and said, "if you are seeking the faith, and if you ever find it, that will be the time when you'll be forsaking Amida."

As in the case of Saichi with the recitation of Amida's name, Oyuki also shows that faith itself can become a hindrance in the working of Amida Buddha. A gap can be created by the mere fact of trying to attain or maintain faith.

On the other hand, realizing that salvation is the absolute working of Amida, when Shomatsu was asked about his salvation, he replied, "Don't ask me, ask the Buddha." Osono, another devotee, also replied by saying "I don't know it; tell me about it." In both cases they recognized totally that salvation is the working of Amida's Will, with themselves completely uninvolved.

"Being lived" is an expression often used by Jodo Shinshu devotees. Recognition that even realizing the Amida's Primal Will is the work of Amida, devotees find their entire lives being led and lived by Amida Buddha. Numerous causes and conditions that bring about various situations in their lives are in fact all accepted as the working of Amida. To devotees, every moment of their lives is with the Namu Amida Butsu. In this total embrace of Amida, devotees find only humbleness and gratitude in whatever situation they face.

Ronald Neufeldt

THE SIKH TRADITION

Introduction

In the history of religions the Sikh tradition stands out as one of the most recent and fascinating phenomenon. The development and maintenance of the tradition is a testimony to the strength of human spirit in the face of seemingly overwhelming odds. While the cradle for the development of the Sikh faith was the Punjab region of northwest India, Sikhism has not remained a simply Indian tradition but has become a world religion making its contributions to and placing its stamp upon communities outside India. The most recent example of this in Alberta was the construction and dedication of a large Sikh *gurudwara* (temple) in 1979. For Canada as a whole, the Sikh community has been a fact of life since the turn of the century.

Historical Development

The history of Sikhism stretches from 1469 to the present. According to N. G. Barrier, this short history can be divided into three periods: the formative period from the birth of Guru Nanak to the death of the tenth and last guru, Gobind Singh, in 1708; the evolution of Sikh institutions, socio-political developments, and a decline of the faith from 1708 to 1849; and the period of resurgence, involving a search for the Sikh identity, which still continues.[1] The most important of these is the formative period, for this was the time when the teachings and basic institutions took shape.

As a faith, Sikhism has its beginning with Guru Nanak, whose teachings eventually captured the hearts and minds of the majority of the inhabitants of the Punjab. While there is an abundance of hagiographical material on the life of Guru Nanak, W. H. McLeod points out that only a skeleton account of him can be confirmed.[2] He was born in 1469 near Lahore, Pakistan. He married and had two sons. For a time he worked in Sultanpur, possibly as an accountant. It was here he experienced a divine calling to teach the true faith, and it was in response to this that he set out on extensive travels in India and possibly beyond. Following his travels he settled in the village of Kartarpur. Included among his many disciples was Lena, who became the second guru, Angad, when Nanak died in 1539.

Angad, whose period as guru lasted from 1539 to 1552, was chosen by Nanak over his eldest son. This caused some disgruntlement, and a threatened schism was apparently averted through the tact and humility of Angad.[3] According to tradition, Angad's contributions lay principally in two areas: he expanded the *langar*, a communal meal which has its roots in Nanak's emphasis on the rejection of caste, and he developed the *gurumukhi* script, in which he compiled Nanak's hymns, the nucleus of the sacred writings of the Sikhs.[4] It is not clear historically whether the langar begins with Nanak or the third guru.

Angad was succeeded by Amar Das, guru from 1552 to 1574. He furthered institutional development through an increase in *manjis* (parishes) and *masands* (appointed agents who organized worship and collected offerings). He added his own hymns and those which were acceptable from the poet-saint tradition to those of Nanak and Angad. He attacked *purdah* (seclusion of women), advocated intercaste marriages and remarriage of widows, and forbade the Hindu practice of *sati* (the ritual burning of a widow on her husband's funeral pyre).[5] This is significant in that the Sikh community has from its earliest history attempted to define itself as a religious community distinct from Hinduism as well as Islam.

Ram Das, the fourth guru, who led from 1574 to 1581, had as his successor his youngest son Arjun, guru until 1606. Under Arjun the temple at Amritsar, the centre of Sikhism , was completed. In addition, the Adi Granth or original Granth Sahib was compiled, ostensibly to thwart the pretensions of his older brother Prithi Chand.[6] It included the writings of the first three gurus, Arjun's own compositions, and the poetry of poet-saints of both Muslim and Hindu origin.[7] Arjun's martyrdom in 1606 is usually seen as a significant turning point towards militarism in Sikh history, although Archer points out that this shift must be attributed at least in part to the increasing organization of Sikhs and the consequent growing circumstantial need for war.[8]

At any rate, antagonism between Sikhs and Muslims had reached sufficient proportions that the young Har Gobind, the sixth guru, surrounded himself with a large armed bodyguard, encouraged martial exercises, and raised a private army — all in the interest of defending the faith. The seventh, eighth, and ninth gurus were Har Rai (1643 1661), Har Krishan (1661 - 1664), and Tegh Bahadur (1664 - 1675). They and the Sikh community suffered from the growing enmity of the Muslim community, particularly at the hands of Aurangzeb. Tegh Bahadur was beheaded in Aurangzeb's court in Delhi and is consequently seen as a martyr.

The culmination of the Sikh's growing militancy came under Gobind Singh, the son of Tegh Bahadur and the tenth guru, who ruled from 1675 to 1708. Though he held to the ideals of love and forgiveness, he also insisted on the duty to resist forcibly any attempts to destroy the Sikh faith. The outcome of this stance was the

formation of the *khalsa*, the community of the pure, charged with protecting and upholding the purity of the faith. Initiation into the community was by a special form of baptism signifying that the initiated were rejecting previous occupations for defence of the faith, and were renouncing family ties, caste, and all creeds and rituals except those sanctioned by the Sikh faith. The symbols prescribed for the khalsa were *kesh* (unshorn hair), *kangha* (comb), *kach* (kneelength breeches), *kara* (steel bracelet), and *kirpan* (sword).[9] Those who were initiated into the khalsa took the name Singh (lion).

The death of Gobind Singh saw permanent guruship vested in the Adi Granth, the scripture, rather than in a living person. The institution of the khalsa and the scripture was directed towards the two long-standing problems which Gobind Singh had inherited: rivalry between masands and quarrels over succession to the guruship. The Granth provided an ongoing centre for the community, and the khalsa provided several unifying factors: a baptismal rite, a common name, tangible symbols, a communion (sipping of nectar), and the *khalsa panth* (the managing committee or elected representatives of the community).[10]

The period between 1708 and 1849 included a number of significant developments advancing Sikhism to the height of its power, under Ranjit Singh. After the death of Govind Singh the leadership of the Sikhs fell to an ascetic, Banda Bahadur, who, with the help of peasant uprisings, was able to install himself as the major power in the Punjab until his death in 1716. According to Kushwant Singh, he changed the social structure of the Punjab by breaking up large Muslim landholdings and redistributing them among Sikhs and Hindus.[11] The immediate years following Banda Bahadur's death saw the emergence of the Sarbat Khalsa, a bienniel assembly at Amritsar to decide matters pertaining to the community.[12] Until 1747, much time was spent opposing both Zacharya Khan, governor of Lahore, and Nadir Shah, a Persian invader.

A series of Mughal-Afghan conflicts, brought on by Afghani invasions, occurred between 1747 and 1769. The Sikhs were able to capitalize on the resulting power vacuum, establishing themselves as a major force in the Punjab. However, it was left to Ranjit Singh to organize the Sikhs into a cohesive power. The result was an empire in northwest India in which Sikhs, Muslims, and Hindus enjoyed equal rights. British annexation occurred ten years after Ranjit Singh's death in 1839.

Following 1849, a number of trends became evident. The Sikhs felt their loss of power keenly and perceived themselves as lagging behind other groups in education and employment.[13] The Sikh population began to dwindle, at least in part because of a move back to Hindu practices.[14] Along with this developed the debate over Sikh identity that is, what constituted tradition and what constituted orthodoxy.[15] Issues debated were whether Sikhism was a special form of Hinduism, whether the Sikhs were a non-Hindu group, and whether a separation from Hinduism occurred at the time of Guru Nanak or later. The result was a flood of literature attempting to formulate authentic Sikh doctrine and to reform and to define Sikh social and religious conduct.[16] The debate also stimulated the development of institutions such as the Singh *sabhas* (councils) throughout the Punjab, the Chief Khalsa Diwan, the Sikh Educational Conference, the Khalsa Tract Society, the Panch Khalsa Agency, the Khalsa Handbill Society, and the Khalsa College.

The concern to define Sikhism was particularly evident in a few of these developments. Membership in the Singh sabhas, for example, demanded that one adhere to the tenets of the gurus and that one not belong to any other religious group. The Chief Khalsa Diwan, created to overcome multiplication of sabhas and duplication of programs, raised funds for various Sikh programs, administered central institutions, and mobilized opinion on theological and social issues. The Anand Marriage Bill, passed in 1909 to legitimize what was considered a distinctive Sikh ceremony, was an attempt to make central for Sikhs the Adi Granth and the corporate life of the community. Finally, the Sikh Educational Conference, first held in 1908, afforded an opportunity for between two and three thousand delegates to hear lectures on Sikh religion and to pass resolutions relating to Sikhism.[17]

Teachings

Since the teachings of Guru Nanak have remained normative for Sikhs, the emphasis here will be on his view of God, man, and the discipline required for salvation.[18] As McLeod points out, the contributions of Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjun, and Guru Gobind Singh do not involve significant modifications of Guru Nanak's teachings. There is, of course, the addition of the two significant institutions which emerged with the death of Guru Gobind Singh: the khalsa, and the vesting of the function of guru in the community, and in the scripture, the Adi Granth. McLeod states: "For modern Sikhism the scripture exists as a channel of communication between God and man, but obviously this could be no part of Guru's Nanak's theology. It must be understood, however, that this doctrine, its significance notwithstanding, is no more than a supplement to the teaching imparted by Guru Nanak. The theology of Guru Nanak remains the substance of Sikh belief."[19]

The teachings developed by Guru Nanak are experientially oriented, revolving around an understanding of God, man, and man's relationship to God. They are essentially creative reworking of the Sant tradition which itself was a synthesis of three religious dissenting movements: Vaishnavite (devotion), Hatha Yoga, and Sufism. Like Vaishnavism, Nanak insisted on love of God, expressed through meditation and devotion. Like the Nath yogis of the Hatha Yoga tradition, he emphasized inward discipline for a mystical union and stressed the rejection

of external forms, ceremonies, caste distinctions, sacred languages, and existing scriptures. Like the Sufis he emphasized monotheism, egalitarianism, and the omnipresence of God. While Guru Nanak's teachings are a reworking of the Sant tradition, they are not a repetition. As McLeod points out, "Guru Nanak's concepts of *Shabad*, the *Nam*, the *Guru*, and the *Hukam* carry us beyond anything that the works of earlier Sants offer in any explicit form."[20]

In Guru Nanak's teachings, God is to be experienced as one. While duality is to be overcome in mystical union, the unity of God is to be understood in a monotheistic rather than a monistic sense. In his absolute or essential aspect, God is unconditioned, or without attributes (*nirguna*). He is eternal (*anadil*) and thus beyond time, death, and trans-migration. He is formless (*nirankar*), and thus images, descended embodiments of God (*avatars*), and anthropomorphic language are to be rejected. He is ineffable, beyond the reach of intellect, perception, and utterance, and therefore is ultimately incomprehensible. In the rejection of avatars and images, Guru Nanak stood clearly within the Sant tradition, which unlike Vaishnaivite Bhakti, rejected any anthropomorphic understanding of God.

Yet God is personal. He becomes *saguna* (one with attributes) so that man might know him. He is the creator of the universe and the sustainer and destroyer of his creation. He is therefore sovereign, the possesor of absolute authority and unqualified power. As creator and sustainer he is imminent in all of his creation, particularly in the hearts of men. His revelation is partial, but sufficient for man to come to know God. Without this revelation man would be helpless to know God. This in effect constitutes the greatness of God, that "Nirankar, the Formless One, is the supreme Lord of the Universe, eternal, absolute, ineffable, and yet proposing that man should know Him and find ultimate peace in union with Him."[21]

Knowing God and finding ultimate peace in union with him presupposes a divine communication of self-expression. Here again Guru Nanak was dependent on both the Sant and Nath yogi traditions, taking concepts from them and developing them further.

A number of important concepts are involved in the notion of divine self-expression. One example is the concept of *Shabad* (Word). For the Nath yogis this referred to a mystical sound heart at the climax of the Hatha Yoga path. For Kabir it was God's Word in the depths of man. For Guru Nanak the Word is "All that concerns God, all that relates to the path which leads to him."[22] Consequently it refers to eternal circumstances and natural phenomena as well as an inward perception or experience.

Closely related to "Shabad" are three other concepts. The *Nam* (name of God) "is the total expression of all that God is."[23] The Nam then must be distinguished from names used to honor God, like "Har" and "Ram". The guru is the voice of God and thus synonymous with Shabad. Finally, *hukam* is the divine order instituted and maintained by God. It is the sum total of all God's activity, expressed in laws governing the physical universe and in the law of karma (consequential action). Though beyond comprehension in its total range, it is sufficiently understandable to enable man to embark on the path to salvation.

Man's ability to perceive the truth, that is, the word and the divine order, is due to two things. In part it is due to the karma of the individual, through which one gains the ability to perceive the Word. Ultimately, however, the gift of perception is the result of *nadar* (the grace of God). "In order that the Guru's voice may be heard there must be a prior gift of perception and this gift comes by God's grace. If He gives it then the Word may be perceived, and if He does not there is nothing a man can do. This in itself is not sufficient for salvation, for even if man accepts the proffered gift he must engage in sustained discipline before he can attain ultimate release."[24]

The discussion of divine grace and the discipline necessary for salvation points to the unregenerate condition of man. Simply put, this condition is one of attachment to the world, pride, and self-centredness, with the consequences of sin, death, and transmigration. Here again the basic concepts are taken from the Sant and Nath Yogic traditions. In his regenerate state, the *man* of man — the indestructible attribute or faculty with which one thinks, decides, and feels — is erratic and prone to worldly attachments. It is under the influence of *haumai*, a condition of sin or self-centredness. The results of this condition are evil impulses such as lust, anger, covetousness, attachment to the world, pride, and a misunderstanding of the nature and purpose of creation as being simply a means to indulge oneself. The result of this karma which perpetuates a transmigration that can be characterized as death — constant separation from God.

Correcting man's regenerate state depends on both the grace of God and the efforts of the individual. The goal is union with God; that is, "the release from transmigration through the blending of the *man* in a union with God, a union which transcends all human expression."[25] The path or discipline is an essentially interior religion, rejecting the pretensions of caste, works of merit, the use of images, pilgrimages, and ascetic practices. Rather, the emphasis is on "the inward disciplines of love, faith, mercy, and humility, expressed in righteousness and compassionate deeds in the upholding of all that is true."[26] Rejection of caste pretensions in particular was expressed by the practice of communal dining, which characterized Sikhism by the time of Amar Das, the third guru.

True religion is expressed particularly in love, devotion and *Nam simaran* (calling to mind the divine name). Loving devotion includes, as in the bhakti traditions, awe, surrender, and singing God's praises. Nam simaran includes meditation on God's qualities and attributes, and the practice of *kirtan* (communal singing of the praises

of God), a practice which has been part of Sikhism since the time of Guru Nanak. The results of true religion are a dying to self (purging of haumai), the redirection of the *man*, growing ecstacy, and eventually the union of the individual *man* with God in the state of *sahaj*, which means the end of the transmigratory cycle.

Conclusion

The emphasis in this presentation has been on the formative period of Sikhism, and more particularly, on the teachings of Guru Nanak himself. It is in this period that the basic ideas and institutions of Sikhism were developed — ideas and institutions which still define the thought and practice of Sikhs. The basic ideas find expression in Guru Nanak, who in his emphasis on interior religion as a response to God developed in a creative fashion terms and ideas taken from the Sant and Nath traditions of yoga. Basic institutions such as the langar, the khalsa and the centrality of the Adi Granth as guru were developed during the tenure of the ten gurus. These institutions still characterize Sikh communities, particularly the worship practiced at the gurudwaras not only in India but also abroad. This is not to suggest that the tradition has been static. As is the case with any religious tradition, the history of Sikhism has been a dynamic one in which the related issues of Sikh self-definition and reform have played and still play a major role.

FOOTNOTES

1. See the introduction of N. G. Barrier, *The Sikhs and their Literature* (New Delhi: Monahar Book Service, 1970).

2. For a treatment of the hagiographical material see the treatment of the *janam-sakhis* in W. H. McLeod, *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1968).

3. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs* (Princeton Univerity Press, 1963) pp.49 - 50.

4. Ibid., pp. 50 - 52. Singh points out that the letters were collected from other scripts current in north India. *Gurumukhi* means literally "from the mouth of the Guru".

5. Ibid., pp. 53 - 54.

6. Ibid., pp. 57 - 58.

7. Among the poet-saints whose writings were included are Jaidev, Namdev, Trilochan, Pramanand, Sadhna, Beni, Ramanand, Dhanna, Pipa, Sain, Kabir, Rav Das, Sur Das, Farid, Bhikan. See Dorothy Field, *The Religion of the Sikhs* (London: John Murray, 1914), p. 15.

8. J. C. Archer, *The Sikhs* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1946), p. 15.

9. Kashwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, pp. 83 - 89.

10. Archer, *The Sikhs*, p. 194.

11. Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 118.

12. Ibid., p. 121.

13. N. G. Barrier, *The Sikhs and Their Literature*, p. xix.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid., pp. xix.

16. Ibid., pp. xix - xxiii.

17. Ibid., pp. xxii - xxxvii.

18. For the analysis of the teachings I will rely upon Mcleod, *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, pp. 148 - 226.

19. Ibid., p. 163.

20. Ibid., p. 161.

21. Ibid., p. 176.

22. Ibid., p. 193.

23. Ibid., p. 196.

24. Ibid., p. 205.

25. Ibid., p. 208.

26. Ibid., p. 212.

MICHAEL A. MORGAN

JUDAISM: GOD, LAW, AND HISTORY

Picture a small room in the old city of Jerusalem. A rabbi and his students have been struggling for many hours over a difficult passage of the Talmud. Finished, the rabbi turns to one of the students. "You have done well," he says. "What is it you are studying at the Hebrew University?" The student, a bit surprised, replies, "Bible — Tanakh." The rabbi turns to him, sighs, and says, "But the Bible is such a little book!"

Whenever I lecture about Judaism to predominantly non-Jewish groups, I begin with this story. Far too often my Christian audiences seem to have the idea that Judaism, as it is practiced today, is not much different than it was during the time of King David. They feel that biblical concerns are necessarily Jewish concerns, that with the advent of Christianity, Judaism fell into a static state and has remained static for nearly two thousand years. If we are to examine the mythic centre of Judaism, we must begin by understanding Judaism's relation to the Old Testament.

Judaism, as we know it today, is a dialogue with God which has been carried on by the Jewish people for more than two thousand years. It is a vibrant, evolving, growing dialogue, whose centre point is the Old Testament; however, the Old Testament itself is indeed "a little book." The process of the dialogue is far more significant. The tale is told of how God, angry with his people one day, demanded that they return his law, the Torah, to him. His people complied, and God was completely amazed as he watched volume upon volume come pouring in. These unexpected volumes in many ways represent the genius of the Jewish people. These volumes — the Mishnah, Tosefta, Talmud, Midrash, law codes, and commentaries — are the Jewish dialogue with God. These volumes define Judaism. They are the living tradiiton of interpretation of the Old Testament. Thus Judaism and Christianity are really sister religions — two differing dialogues with the same mother, the Bible.

In our attempt to discover the mythic centre of Judaism we must examine three aspects of Judaism's dialogue: God, law, and history. Let us first understand that a myth is not a fairy tale. Rather, myths are expressions of our universal concerns. By the use of the mythic we encounter the transtemporal and metaphysical, the ultimate realities of our existence. By describing our ultimate concerns in mythic language we capture those concerns within our own frames of reference. Myth is not merely the language of religion, it is the expression of its central realities. Ritual is the earthly re-enactment of our myths which aid us in understanding and remembering them. The worship of either myth or ritual, however, is the ultimate idolatry, since it confuses the ideas with the idioms through which they are expressed.

Most of us expect that God will be the mythic centre of Judaism. While this might be true of the Old Testament it is not true of Judaism in dialogue with the Old Testament. Rather, it is Jewish law, the Torah, which has been the centre of Jewish myth until the present day. It is my opinion that law is currently losing its mythic centrality in Judaism and is being replaced by a growing appreciation for the values implicit in history and culture.

Judaism and God

The Bible has many verses which demand comment. One which we will explore is found in Exodus 24:7, where it says, "all the words of the Lord we will do and we will listen to (or obey) them." Why do they respond with an affirmation of action before they actually hear the commands? The rabbis explain that God has taken his law to many other people, who first questioned its content and then refused to accept it, but the Israelites accepted it out of their deep love and affection before they even knew the contents. There is a subtle notion about Judaism related here which demands our attention: Judaism does not mythologize its deity; it assents to his existence without question.

Most every religious system creates myths about its god(s). These define his/her existence in such a way as to give meaning to their conception of the universe. Dr. Nahum Sarna, writing about the opening of Genesis, makes a most significant observation: The God of the Old Testament has no myth. We do not discuss his origin, history, sex, or abode. Judaism follows this tradition. The rabbi's comment on the beth, the beginning letter of the Hebrew Bible: Why was this letter used; why not the first letter of the alphabet? One ingenious answer was that since beth is closed on three sides and open in the direction of the rest of the Bible, it is not for man to question what came above, below, or before creation.

What then does the Jew believe about the nature of God. There is only one dogmatic statement at the core of his belief: "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, The Lord is One" (Deut. 6.4). Faith or belief in this statement lies at the heart of the Jewish dialogue with God. But the intriguing fact is that the dialogue has never answered the questions of the meaning of this statement. In two thousand years of dialogue there has never been a single schism in Judaism due to the different interpretations of this verse. Compare this to the history of Christianity. Judaism has allowed, maintained, and encouraged hundreds of diverse views about the one God. The Old

Testament's mythic core concerns the acceptance of the belief in one God; Judaism's dialogue has already accepted this point.

Judaism's views on the nature of God travel from one extreme to another. There is the anthropomorphic God of the Old Testament, sitting on his cloud, beard flowing, hurling lightning bolts, or using a computer console if you prefer. The philosophic denial of this idea is incorporated as well. Philo, the first century Hellenist, models his ideas on the Platonic image of an ultimate essence of perfection separated from the universe of man and communicating with him through his intermediaries: logos, angels, prophets, and law.

Two great Aristotelians, Saadia of the ninth century and Maimonides of the eleventh, viewed God as the ultimate cause, the source of all reason. In recent times, Herman Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig, and Emil Fackenheim have followed the Kantian-Hegelian tradition, while Martin Buber has followed Sartre and the existentialists. Mordecai Kaplan views God as a process of becoming, and A. J. Heschel views him as a figure in an eternal mutual search for his creation.

At the other extreme, the mystical tradition allows systems like Abulafia's, which borders on the monistic, or those which speak of ten emanations of the total reality of nothingness, which is God. The prime example of Judaism's acceptance of wide diversity is Baruch Spinoza, whose pantheism came as close as any to being heretical. Though Spinoza was excommunicated, it was not for his philosophy.

"Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One." It is here that the Jew begins his dialogue. He accepts, and he strives to understand. na'aseh v'Nishmah — we will do it, then we will understand it. No dogma, no heresy, and no mythic center.

Law in Judaism

If we are to find the mythic centre of Judaism, its central concern, we must not look to God but rather to his revelation, his law or Torah. Spinoza was excommunicated for his violations of Jewish law, not for his ideas about God. Maimonides is far better remembered for his legal commentaries than for his philosophy. The beautiful mystical system of Joseph Karo is all but forgotten when compared to his extensive legal code. The Jew accepts God; it is His revelation, His law, what He demands of man which forms the true centre of his religious system.

Another interpretation of the meaning of Israel's response, "We will do and we will hear," is told rather tongue-in-cheek. God was so frustrated at being constantly rejected by those who did not want his law that when he saw the people of Israel assembled at Mt. Sinai, he lifted the mountain over their heads and said, "Will you accept my law?" They replied, "We will do it." Then God set the mountain down, and the children of Israel said, "Now let us hear it!"

In a sense this story is unfortunate, for it reinforces the Christian misconception that the law is a burden. The Pauline perception of Christianity has forced it to reject Old Testament law on most levels. To the Jew, however, law is the ultimate sign of God's grace, his gift to man. It is through discussion and attempted understanding of God's law that man encounters the Divine. There are three major points to remember when one discusses the rabbinic idea of law and revelation.

1. Law is an eternally binding covenant. The covenant is a contractual agreement drawn up by God with his people after their rescue from Egypt. Its demands are clear:

   > "And thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon thy heart, and thou shall teach them diligently to children and shall talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walketh by the way, and when thou liest down and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them as a sign upon thy hand and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the doorposts of thy house and upon thy gates." (Deut. 6:5-9)

   The rabbis teach that every Jew must view himself as if he were present when this covenant was sealed at Sinai. This is the meaning of the wicked son in the Passover Seder. He asks, "What does this service mean to you?" By saying "you" he excludes himself from the chain of tradition. It is this chain of tradition which the Jew is expected to teach diligently to his children, so that all Israel will continue to do God's will. This chain is eternal, never to be broken or altered.

2. Law is dual in nature. Moses received two laws on Sinai, the written and the oral. The written is of course the Bible. But all written texts demand commentary; this is why the Bible is "such a little book." For Moses also received the oral law, the method to apply, interpret, change, and thereby keep the written law current and meaningful. The system is clearly portrayed in the Pirke Aboth, "Moses received the law on Sinai and handed it to Joshua, Joshua to the elders, the elders to the prophets, the prophets to the men of the great assembly . . . ." Thus the chain of the dual system is established. There are two laws, each equally valid. It is the oral law which is Judaism's dialogue with its deity. Such a system allows diversity and change while maintaining the unbroken chain of tradition.

3. The rabbis control the chain of tradition and are the vehicles of divine inspiration. The best explanation of this idea occurs in a very important talmudic story found in Bab Metzia 59b:

> On that day R. Eliezer brought forward every imagineable argument, but they did not accept them. Said he to them: "If the halachah agrees with me, let this carob-tree prove it!" Thereupon the carob-tree was torn a hundred cubits out of its place — others affirm, four hundred cubits. "No proof can be brought from a carobtree," they retorted. Again, he said to them: "If the halachah agrees with me, let the stream of water prove it!" Whereupon the stream of water flowed backwards. "No proof can be brought from a stream of water," they rejoined. Again he urged: "If the halachah agrees with me, let the walls of the schoolhouse prove it," whereupon the walls inclined to fall. But R. Joshua rebuked them, saying: "When scholars are engaged in a halachic dispute, what have ye to interfere" Hence they did not fall, in honour of R. Joshua, nor did they resume upright, in honour of R. Eleizer; and they are still standing thus inclined. Again he said to them: "If the halachah agrees with me, let it be proved from Heaven!" Whereupon a heavenly voice cried out, "Why do ye dispute with R. Eliezer, seeing that in all matters the halachah agrees with him!" What did he mean by this? Said R. Jeremiah: "What the Torah had already been given at Mount Sinai, we pay not attention to a Heavenly Voice, because Thou has long since written in the Torah at Mount Sinai, "After the majority must one incline." R. Nathan met Elijah and asked him: "What did the Holy One Blessed be He, do in that hour?" "He laughed (with joy)", he replied, saying, "My sons have defeated me, my sons have defeated me."

   There is certainly intended humor here, but more significantly the story captures the depth of man's responsibility in his dialogue with God.

The love of the law, of God's ongoing process of revelation, has been the heart and soul of Judaism. In the acceptance of these three rabbinic principles we define the centre of Jewish identity. One way to appreciate the importance of an idea in a religious system is to ask how many schisms have developed around it. Judaism has never had a major schism over the question of God's nature. Two major schisms, however, the Karaites and the early modern Reform movements, developed over the question of the role of law in Jewish life. Herein lies our mythic center.

Modern Judaism

Reform Judaism has not caused the current turmoil in the modern Jewish community. Despite its schismatic approach to Jewish law, Reform Judaism is but one of a number of contributing factors. The modern Jew is aware of current religious scholarship and its criticism of traditional faith. Futhermore, he is adrift in a massive flood of science and technology, which have progressed farther and faster than our religious system's ability to respond. It was thought that Jews were abandoning Judaism during the last half century. However, it appears that Jews are actually seeking an anchor, a new mythic centre from which to continue their dialogue. The modern Jew no longer says, "I will do it and I will hear it." Rather, he desires to understand and then make his commitment. This position lacks the romance of the rabbinic Midrash, but it is more in line with the current situation. The vast majority of North American Jewry believe in historical culture even if they cannot define or explain it.

The solution to the modern dilemna requires a reorientation in thinking, the first step of which is an appreciation of the vital concept that the idiom is not the idea and the origin is not the meaning. I have pondered the significance of this statement ever since I first heard it expressed by Dr. Theodore Gaster some ten years ago. Perhaps a simple example will clarify the concept. The Jew is taught to respect all life. This is an idea. One manner of expressing his concern is found in the Jewish dietary laws. These laws of Kashrut are an idiom. Other religions express similar ideas in other idioms, but the expression of these ideas in uniquely Jewish idioms creates a strengthening bond, Jew to Jew, throughout the world. They aid in the preservation of Jewish life, as they aid in teaching the Jew a basic lesson concerning life.

The modern Jew, however, tends to reject the idiom, because he has basically rejected the origin of the institution. Either he feels that such laws are out of touch with modern technology and nutritional knowledge, or he rejects the mythic legal centre which demands the fulfillment of these laws because they are divinely revealed and part of the chain of tradition. He has rejected the origins but has failed to grasp the meaning. The meaning is a melange of four thousand years of legal discussion, folklore, literature, suffering, philosophic discourse, and even culinary expertise which has surrounded these dietary laws. It is a chain of tradiiton potentially far stronger, far deeper, and far more meaningful than law by itself. The mythic centre has in fact expanded to forge new and stronger links to the chain of tradition. To break this enlarged chain is to cut the central reality of who the Jew really is, but the new chain is far stronger than the one built only on Jewish law.

Thus it is the sum total of Jewish history, culture, philosophy, and law which should lie at the heart of a modern reworking of the Jewish mythic centre. Modern Judaism has begun to recognize this, but two thousand years of inertia are most difficult to deflect, despite the need. In fairness one must point out that many feel that

law should remain the mythic centre of Judaism and no deviation is possible. It is hard to evaluate a major religious shift in only the first century of its existence.

As for myself, I have always been fascinated by the midrashic comment on Psalms 55:7, "O that I had the wings of a dove." "Why a dove" Rabbi Azariah said in the name of R. Judan B. Simon, "Because all other birds, when tired, rest on a rock or tree, but when a dove is tired she draws in one of her wings and flies on the other" (Genesis Rabbah 39:8). Time will tell in which manner the Jewish dialogue with God will soar.

EARLE H. WAUGH

al-Qur'an al-Kareem: QUR'ANIC PIETY IN THE MUSLIM TRADITION

There is much in our contemporary society that would militate against the task we have set for ourselves, that is, to come to understand and appreciate the different religious worlds in which we live. For, on the one hand, something we call "the spirit of the age" responds restlessly to any excessive consideration of religion, much the same way one is embarrassed when a relative monopolizes the conversation at a party and succeeds in boring everyone silly. On the other hand, contemporary practitioners of various religious beliefs seem to be pushing their views with a new stridency, to the exclusion of other faiths, such that any attempt at a moderate opinion is branded as heretical. To chart our way through these shoals is not easy.

Yet it is, after all, necessary for us to do so. We are enmeshed in a culture from the moment we first breathe until we depart, and that culture formulates values, presents us with living options, and structures us in ways that it is safe to say we do not yet fully comprehend. As Mircea Eliade, the historian of religion, notes: "On the most archaic levels of culture, living, considered as being human, is in itself a religious act, for food-getting, sexual life, and work have a sacramental value. In other words, to be — or rather, to become — a man signifies being 'religious.'"[1]

We are not that much different from our primitive ancestors. Hence any measuring-off of one experience over another, any hope or dream endowed with reality becomes a step in our quest for meaningfulness and thus a formulation of religious significance. Great world religions show immense depth and sophistication, but they are at bottom collectivities of acts, both mental and physical, that enshrine ultimate meaningfulness. This study focuses upon one area of meaningfulness, but a singularly crucial one in Islam: religious sentiments toward the Qur'an.

Muhammad Ali, who led the Kilafat movement in Indian Islam around the turn of the century, gives us insight into the impact that reading the Qur'an has had for the ordinary Muslim:

> And long before I had read through, Eureka! I had found a new meaning in life and in this world and an entirely new significance in Islam. I had been familiar enough with the main tenets of Islam; but they had been little more than a bundle of doctrines and commandments, each for a particular department of life or situation, though, of course, I had looked upon them as superior to the dogmas and ethical codes of other faiths. Now, however, they acquired a new coherence and, as it were, fell suddenly into place, creating an effect of unity such as I had never realized before . . . I had discovered God and in discovering Him and His message to mankind I had discovered myself. I had found a new meaning and a hitherto unrealized fullness in life, contrasted with which my previous existence, which I had thought to be crowded enough for a somewhat somnolent continent of the east like India, appeared to be empty and barren. The moment this eternal truth had dawned upon me in all its refulgence I was too full of it to keep it to myself, even if I could have desired it. I was literally bursting with my new discovery and felt impelled to shout it to all the sundry.[2]

From this selection we are able to single out a number of ingredients which characterize the Muslim perception of the Holy Writing, making it: (1) the prime symbolic centre of Muslim identity; (2) the basis of theological depiction; (3) the foundation of the ethical code and conduct; (4) the raison d'être of Muslim forms of expression in literature and art, and (5) the wellspring of personal devotion and renewal. Such multi-dimensionality indicates that we will find in Qur'anic piety a very important key to understanding the Muslim tradition, and a survey of the material dealing with each area should suggest the profundity of its meaning.

The Qur'an as centre

It is well known that nonbelievers who read the Qur'an for the first time are mystified as to why Muslims think it an inspired book. It has a rugged style, even jerky at times, with its themes carried for only the briefest of narratives, as if its being in the Holy Writ were for reminder purposes only. It is frequently punctuated by pious exhortations. It moves regularly from deep mystical perceptions of God to the minutiae of acting properly. Such characteristics regularly leave Western readers disoriented and dismayed.

One way to "translate" the Qur'an for Western appreciation is not to restructure the Holy Book but to orient readers to the "situation" of the Muslim scripture, that is, to establish its prerequisites. The Qur'an reciter/reader requires a certain attitudinal frame of mind in order to appreciate it: one must take a disposition toward actively believing. From the disposition flows an awareness that every act is under the direct and compassionate eye of God. Qur'an reciting then is a way in which an individual can enter into the centre of a relationship with God which has implications for every area of life. Some writers have used the term "evocative" to designate this attitudinal complex, but much more is involved than calling up a certain response. It is to set oneself in the centre of a network of proper relationsips, as demonstrated in this key prayer:

IN THE NAME OF God, the merciful, the Compassionate.
Praise be to God, the Lord of all being,
The Merciful, the Compassionate; Master of the day of judgement.
Thee only we serve and to Thee only we come for aid.
Guide us in the straight path, the path of those whom Thou has blessed.
Not of those against whom there is displeasure,
Nor of those who go astray.[3]

This suggests that one does not read the Qur'an from a neutral state; it already is a liturgical book,[4] a fact attested to by the many stories of the faithful listening to the revelations from the Prophet's mouth and then piously reciting them as part of their devotions.[5] Its oral presentation only serves to heighten the immediacy of its message. Consequently, any attempt to make a critical study of the Qur'an on "objective" literary grounds is doomed to failure, if by that study one hopes to arrive at its true meaning, that is, its meaning for believers. This explains why such modernists as Taha Husain and Muhammad 'Abduh have not been able to generate followers who would apply the tools of Western critical scholarship to treating the Qur'an and even the Hadith (traditions of the prophet) like other texts. Some writers have argued that there is an even greater reluctance now to apply critical analysis than heretofore.[6]

The usual reason given for this turn of events is that the Muslim theological establishment has rejected any nontheological investigation of the Qur'an: it is the sacred speech of God, given directly to the Prophet, with the conviction that it is God's final message to mankind. Any attempt to restrict its language or its idea system to its historical context has been rejected; indeed would be regarded as heretical. But it is my suggestion that the real reason resides in the Qur'an's being the symbolic centre of Muslim life, and any undermining of the absolute nature of that symbol, any relativizing of it, especially with critical tools not derived from Muslim sources, is deemed to be a weakening of the Muslim mythos.

How deep this mythos is may be indicated with a couple of examples. While in Cairo, I often saw old men sitting in doorways, their wizened bodies bent from a long and arduous life, enthusiastically chanting aloud as they followed the words in the Qur'an with their scrawny fingers. They seemed always to be there, and one day I asked a nearby merchant if they read like this all the time. "They are not reading!" he replied, "They are reciting. None of them knows how to read. If you were to ask them any word's meaning out of the context of the Qur'an, they would not even recognize it. The Qur'an is only a prop. As for whether they are always there, the answer is yes!"

During Ramadan, the sacred month of fast, it is not unusual for the devout to dedicate themselves to reading through the entire Qur'an. This is a favorite devotion of local Muslims. It is also the basis for the famous worry beads, the Ninety-nine Names of God represented on the rosary, which later was bequeathed to the West for Catholic devotional purposes. The Names are derived from the titles and characteristics accorded Allah in the Qur'an.

The Qur'an as theological canvas

Very early in its history, Islam moved into areas heavily influenced by the Judeo-Christian tradition and Greek intellectual culture. Both of these were to have a significant impact on its theology. A number of early polemical writings have survived, indicating that the agenda for discussion between theologians of the older traditions and Islam were often set by Jewish and Christian scholars. This is to be expected, since both of these groups had had ample time to develop a complex theological system, and moreover, had been heir to the Greek principles of debate. In short, relationships at the theological level moved in a jargon and dealt with issues charged by interconfessional rivalry. Questions as to the nature of God, the nature of the salvation community, and public polity all were hotly debated, with each tradition drawing on its fund of knowledge for rebuttal.[7]

For Muslims this sparked a natural move into the language and idiom of the Qur'an. They had no intellectual traditions of rhetoric or philosophical debate. The lacuna was filled by translators who brought them the works of Aristotle, Plato, or their more recent disciples. The creative interaction with Greek philosophical principles was expressed in theology in the famous Mu'tazili school of the tenth century. Its adherents stressed the primacy of reason in theology and in understanding the Qur'an, and their influence reached to the office of caliph. Even when this form of theological enterprise was rejected by schools which gained ascendancy in Islam, it continued to propose alternatives for scholars. A compromise of sorts was worked out by al-Ash'ari, his contemporary al-Maturidi, and later al-Zamakshari, who utilized philosophical techniques and principles while interpreting Qur'anic meaning from within its revelatory authority. Henceforth, theology looked to the Hadith for interpretive tools. In contrast to Western theology, which stressed that factors in the world had to be incorporated into any systematic overview of reality, Islam asserted its basic assumptions of God and the world, and argued that the world had to be interpreted through the principles laid down in God's Word. It was a stable and self-contained system, providing confidence and unity, spiritual vision and fixity. It was not to be seriously challenged until the twentieth century.

What I most want to underline is that the theological enterprise ultimately welled up out of Qur'anic piety. Each word could be lovingly researched and documented, each saying relevant to its ideas codified and detailed, and each inflection examined and certified. Such lavish attention to the text goes beyond normal scholarly attention to detail. It was the flowering of spiritual insight born out of the speaking of God. The wonder and the miracle of Islam is that God spoke to man clearly, in a rich old language — Arabic — and that speaking could be filled with so many nuances that the scholar became involved in profound meditation when he perused its words. Thus, at one level, the exploration of theologians was the elaboration and mutation of ultimate reality in speech, while at another it was the growth of a distinctive form of Muslim liturgical worship.

The foundation of an ethical code and conduct

Islam has often been seen in the West as austere, its public expression bereft of the twinkle of spontaneity or the gaiety of humor. Some of this perception is justified. But this is too simple a reading to go on and insist that because of this there is lack of emotional depth. All of us are influenced by and extensions of collective styles of living. Every community, as the residents of Calgary will tell you of Edmonton, displays a certain cohesion of values and expressions that gives the city character. As we also know, that character may also be held to be inferior. This analog may help us understand another aspect of Muslim consciousness — the moral dimension.

In his monumental work, *The Venture of Islam*,[8] Marshall Hodgson points out that in the corpus of Muslim life two elements derived from the Qur'an were the potency of its word and the exculsivity of its message. The Qur'an was an event, an act, before it was anything else. Its words were meant to make an immediate claim on its hearers — a moral claim which could not be ignored. Like one's presence at the scene of a devastating accident, it immediately demanded something from the individual. One could run from the challenge, but that turning away is not morally neutral, it is condemnatory. The very act of living is a statement of response to this challenge. The result is that all activity is shot through with the incredible responsibility of being judged by God.

The second ingredient is its exclusivity. In this it shares the common trait of its sister religions in the prophetic tradition: God calls out a community to speak for him. Not many communities, not several nations, but one solitary community bears the task of bringing mankind to God. Muslims of all the prophetic communities have tied this calling directly to the moral and historical shape their *ummah* (community) has taken. For, in moral terms, the Qur'an brings the final and complete revelation of God to humans. In historical terms, the primal message of *tawhid* (unity) is that this is the last and only community through whom God will speak to mankind, and the history of the community must therefore embody the ongoing truth.

This explains one reason why Islam is so insular and devoid of religious humor: it is a serious business for you, your family, and your community to build the character which God insists upon in his vision of the world. It is therefore essential to see that while Islam has spawned several subgroups these have always held themselves to be part of the ummah, and that within a certain latitude they are all creating the kind of society God has demanded. As surely as does the collectivity known as Edmonton, this common vision gives the community a certain social shape.

Faithfulness to the intuition that you are constructing a living history and religion requires strict adherence to its codes and generates a religious sense as profound as the ecstacy of St. Therese and as demanding as the Geneva of Calvin. In effect, the development of the *shari'a* (law) did not come about through a nation state forcing the faithful to accept codes of behavior agreeable only to itself. Throughout Islamic history the state has indeed tried that, but unless it draws its support from within the Muslim consensus it is rejected. Rather, the source of shari'a is a spiritual commitment to mortar together, brick by brick, a stance that is in keeping with God's revealed will. Acting morally, then, in effect is to plunge into the accident and allow its claims upon your time and concern, because you know firmly and completely that that is God's exclusive direction. It is acting out the event of the Qur'an in the separate moments of life. This is what being one of the faithful, being a member of ummah, is all about.

Such an interpretation of law has had a critical and far-reaching impact on the character of the Muslim way of life. What appears on the surface to be barren and formal is really only the vessel for an existential dialogue with the world, building the order of God. This interpretation of law explains why Muslims can sometimes get excited about little matters and respond with actions far beyond the bounds of what we think is necessary. It also explains one of the most problematic areas for Muslims in a Western and even Alberta context: commitments to a Muslim character may imply alienation from our culture and result in resentment of massive proportions.

One example will suffice. A young man from the Muslim community in Edmonton, born shortly before his parents emigrated here, grew to his early twenties and took a job. Though he still lived at home, his parents were continually distressed by some of his actions. Shortly after taking his job he came home with a new car. The household erupted into an orgy of conflict. His father was outraged that he had purchased a car without asking his parents; it was a commitment uncontrolled by the linkage of family decision-making, and hence a denial of the father's power over his family. The close structure of family life was the last bastion against the subversive elements of Canadian society, which were not only corroding the sound values of their homeland but denied the

very truths of the family enshrined in Muslim law. The son's action denied their religion and made a mockery of the Qur'an.

The destructive aspects of this conflict serve to show us the logic of the father's assertions: all important decisions must be made by the family, with the father as head — this is the way of the Qur'an and the shari'a: the independent attitude of the young man was foreign to these sources and therefore must derive from a hostile environment, from a value system which the Muslim community must reject in the name of its vision. Thus, at the heart of this problem is the question of the legitimacy of traditional interpretations, as embraced in a kind of pious attitude toward the norms accepted by the ummah as a whole. It is a painful business, since it goes to the core of Muslim religious perceptions of the meaning of the Qur'an.

The raison d'être of Muslim forms of expression in literature and art

Pre-Islamic Arabs invested great tribal pride in their ability to compose poetry. Indeed, annual fairs were held at which artists representing various tribes competed in the deft and brilliant turn of phrase. It is obvious that such a rich and sophisticated Arabic as is found in the Qur'an rests on a long and distinguished oral tradition. As the Muslim empire grew, Arabic became the medium of communication. The close intertwining of the Arabic tongue and the flourishing literary world is singular. For, unlike English, Arabic was seen first and foremost as a liturgical language, utilized only secondarily for other purposes. Even the most dry and prosaic of writings could be enlivened with quotations from Holy Writ. In that sense the Qur'an is probably the most quoted book man has ever had, and its influence has been felt far and wide in the Muslim political sphere, in a manner hardly comparable to other holy scriptures. Later, when other languages took its place, it still retained a sense of primacy and uniqueness. Thus it has infused a whole culture in a most intimate manner.

We can see its influence in art in the same way. The written word became the focus for a rich and varied art form. Everything — vessels, carpets, daily utensils, and the great forms of art — attracted the various scripts. Verses from the Qur'an became the basis of this art, and when architectural forms were developed, script work became intricately incorporated into its design. In a very real sense, the Muslim was surrounded by the symbols of his religious life, epitomized in the writings of the Holy Book.

The word that would seem to best depict the relaitonship between artistic expression and reality is *mandala*. Engraving selections from the Qur'an on buildings, textiles, and utensils cannot just be a cipher setting them apart, since cloth and jugs were elements of the workaday world. Rather, its rationale was to remember God in whatever aspect of life one found oneself. Though this remembering was elevated to liturgical form in the religious life of the mystics of Islam, the Sufis, and served as the root of the formal laws of their collective identity, it is unlikely they were doing more than building upon a piety of the word already present. The Holy Writ inscribed on the artifacts of the world serves to place the individual in the right relationship with the central element of the universe — Allah. Just as with paintings and art from Buddhism, Qur'anic verses serve to locate and focus, providing a way into the profundity of being that lies beyond the concreteness of paint, stone, and fibre.[9] In this way the language of the ancient Arabs has been transformed into a medium for orienting the believer to God, and beyond that, representing an elaborate Muslim cosmology of ultimate reality.

The Wellspring of personal devotions and renewal

No survey of the place of the Qur'an in the spiritual life of Islam would be complete without touching on its relation to personal piety. Abu-I Salt sets the emotional horizon for us:

> 'Tis no matter to amaze
> If thy gifts outstripped my praise,
> Or thy bounty overfilled
> This my vessel, ere it spilled.[10]

The believer found in the Qur'an a vision of a universe permeated by God: His presence breathes through every event, every moment, every place.

Worship is mediated for the faithful by the words of the Qur'an; its phraseology gives shape to their soul's feelings; the magnificence of its oration and the beauty of its rhythm can reduce the believer to a state of trembling. Frederick Denny has begun a study of the growth and development of Qur'an recitation, and he points out that the recitation itself becomes a type of spiritual enterprise, incorporating the believer into a world that is at once aesthetic and engaging.[11] Muhammad's detractors were forever asking for a miracle or a sign of his being a prophet, but he pointed time and again to the Qur'an as the greatest miracle. Participating in its expression is the prime medium for entering into the presence of God and for renewing man's life.

Many stories are told of Qur'an recitation reducing strong men to tears and transforming confrontation into peace. Early in Islamic history, Mu'awiya's followers — some say fearing defeat at the hands of Ali — placed Qur'ans on the ends of their lances. The forces of Ali ceased fighting immediately, and a battle that may well have been definitive for Muslim history was never fought. Thus Islam, submission, is a fundamental ingredient in

the force of the message from the Qur'an, and listening to this message has been, from the beginning of Islam, the chief means of spiritual vivification. Any cultic performance of any kind always involves the words of the Qur'an.

In Alan Villier's *Sons of Sinbad*, we find the following portrayal of Muslim seafarers in the waters around Arabia: They

> . . . began the day with prayer. First ablutions, then prayer. The dawn prayer was not communal: each man prayed as best pleased him, having first washed hands, face and feet in water hauled up from the sea. They always stood facing the direction of Mecca . . . stood silent a moment or two in meditation, putting from their minds all unworthy thoughts, and then fell easily and rhythmically into the exercise and words of the set prayers.
>
> It was interesting to watch the changes which came over some of their faces. The lines would soften, the flash fade from imperious eyes and whatever there might have been of arrogance, pride, vanity, quite disappear. There was no hypocrisy in those strong faces which looked toward Mecca. It was obvious that their religion was a real and living thing. Their prayers were not simply a formula to be mouthed, but a form of very real communion with a very real god. None of them prayed hurriedly; they always spent a few moments first in silent meditation, in this discard of their worldly thoughts.[13]

This essentially neutral description touches upon another dimension of the Qur'an: its importance in renewing the spirit of believers. *Hayya*, as Kenneth Cragg so well defines it, "is the arousing initial word in that call to prayer, repeated many times a day by the muezzin. 'Come ye unto worship: Come ye unto the good.' It is an imperative from the root verb, to live, to come alive."

This coming alive is not just the awakening of individuals to another more powerful dimension. It is entry into self-discovery, as the mystics of Islam were graphically to demonstrate. Yet, as the Qur'an shows, man is not the measure of all things, and he goes immediately into error when he thinks that he is. As Fakhr al-Din Razi, the twelfth century classical commentator, states: "Petitions terminate in the presence of his bounty: needs fade away as the soul finds her reliance in himself. The need of the creature is not satisfied by the whole of created things. Rather his infinite longing demands to be met by infinite graciousness and power by none other than the truth himself, praised and exalted be he."

Thus the compelling message of the Qur'an is not its demands on man but the claims that God has on man's being, and it is devotion to its vision of God that has motivated the greatest Muslims and, at bottom, has activated some of the best elements of Islamic culture.

Conclusion

The Islamic tradition, like that of all world religions, faces problems in the contemporary environment. Those of us who recognize the magnificent contribution religion has made to mankind must strive to understand both it and ourselves. Yet it is surely only fair to recognize that its power derives from the vision it holds within itself. Muslims will continue to play a significant role in Alberta, both by virtue of their numbers and their success, but in the long run it will be how effective they are at shaping their religious life to the cultural formations of this land that will assure their growth. Islam has had and continues to have structures that deliver reality to its believers. In our discussion we have explored in a preliminary manner the religious endowments of Islamic tradition related to its Holy Writ. They may take different forms, and the content may give rise to some conflicts with other traditions, but the basic structures are reflective of common human concerns and common religious responses. As such they are part of a heritage that, as Ashiq Pasha wrote:

> As a body without soul is an empty form,
> A country without culture is an arid desert.
> The soul of the universe is man,
> Whose Lord makes radiant the most ungrateful land,
> Clears the forests and builds monuments,
> Changing his abode to the home of joy.[15]

FOOTNOTES

1. Mircea Eliade, *A History of Religious Ideas*: Volume I *From the Stone Age to the Eleusinian Mysteries*; translated by W. Trask (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), preface.

2. Muhammad Ali, *My Life, A Fragment in Islam from Within*; Illus. and tr. Kenneth Cragg and Marston Speight, (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1980), pp. 16 and 17.

3. The Glorious Qur'an, surah, 1.

4. S. D. Goitein, *Studies in Islamic History and Institutions*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1966) p. 88.

5. It is said that Muhammad heard recitations in devotions that he had forgotten. See Ibn Ishaq, *Life of Mohammed*, tr. A. Guillaume (London: Oxford University Press, 1955).

6. See Hava Lazarus - Yafeh, "Contemporary Religious Attitudes of Muslim Arabs Towards the Ka'bah and the Hajj," in *Asian and African Studies*, Volume XII, 1978, especially pp. 190, 191.

7. For a survey of these developments, see W. Montgomery Watt, *Free Will and Predestination in Early Islam*, (London: Luzac, 1948), or L. Gardet and M. M. Anawati, *Introduction a la theologie musulmane*, (Paris: Vrin, 1948).

8. Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), especially Volume I, Prologue and Chapter II.

9. On mandalas see Giuseppe Tucci, *The Theory and Practice of the Mandala*, (New York: S. Weiser, 1970).

10. See Abu-l-Salt, "Bounty" in *Moorish Poetry*, tr. A. J. Arberry (London: Cambridge University Press, 1961) p. 107.

11. See Frederick M. Denny "Exegesis and Recitation: Their Development as classical form of Qur'anic Piety," in *Transitions and Transformations in the History of Religions*, ed. F. Reynolds and T. Ludwig, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980) pp. 91 - 123.

12. Alan Villiers, *Sons of Sinbad*, (London: Hodder and Stroughton, 1940) p. 30.

13. Kenneth Cragg, *Alive to God, Muslim and Christian Prayer*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 30.

14. Fahkr Al-Din Al-Razi, "The Clear and the Shining" in C. E. Padwick, *Muslim Devotions*, (London: S.P.C.K., 1961), pp. 123 - 124.

15. Gharib Nama, tr. Najib Ullah, *Islamic Literature*, (New York: Washington Square Press, 1963), p. 376..

FR. MIRONE R. KLYSH

THE ORTHODOX TRADITION

In a farewell message to his disciples after his resurrection and before ascending into heaven, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ instructed them: "All authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." (Matt. 28:18-20).

With these words, the Son of God established the foundation of his Orthodox Christian church. He was to be the head of the church, and she was to receive her authority from him. His apostles and their followers and successors were to fulfill two main functions: they were to teach all peoples those truths which they had learned at the feet of Christ, and they were to minister to the needs of the people. What they preached they were to practice in the community of God's people.

Though the foundation of the Orthodox church was laid by Christ, the birth of the church occurred on the first Christian Holy Day of Pentecost. This great event in the life of the church is described in Acts: "When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place . . . And there appeared on them tongues of fire . . . and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit . . ." (Acts 2:1-4). Thus the seal of the Holy Spirit was placed upon the first members of the church, the mystical body of Christ. Furthermore, it was under the guidance and direction of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity that they were to carry out the commandment which they had received from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Having been sealed by the Spirit of Truth, the Apostles did not waste any time but immediately went out and preached the "Good News" in Jerusalem. When they had finished speaking, three thousand souls were baptized and became members of the church. The account of the birth of the Orthodox church concludes with these words: "And they devoted themselves to the Apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42).

Beginning in Jerusalem, the Apostles and their followers carried the teachings of the Lord to and beyond the lands around the Mediterranean Sea. Accounts of their early missionary efforts are found in Acts, with special emphasis being given to the journeys and preaching of Apostle St. Paul. From other sources it is known that Apostle St. Thomas traveled all the way to India and successfully planted the seeds of Christian faith in that land. Several years ago, Orthodox Christians from India worshipped with us in Winnipeg. During the fellowship hour following the Holy Liturgy they shared with us the fact that the tree of faith which was planted in India by St. Thomas is still alive and bearing fruit.

Of more interest to many Orthodox Christians in Western Canada are the traditional accounts of the missionary journeys of Apostle St. Andrew the First-Called, especially the descriptions of his travels to the lands north of the Black Sea. According to the *Primary Chronicle* of Kyivan Rus', Apostle St. Andrew traveled up the Dnepr River from the Black Sea. One night he camped with his disciples on the bank of the river at the foot of some high hills. The next morning, St. Andrew pointed to the hills and prophesied: "See you these hills. Behold, for on them shall shine the blessing of God. A great city shall be built here and God shall cause many churches to rise upon them."[1] Before leaving this site — on which the city of Kiev with its numerous churches later was built — the Apostle erected a cross on one of the hills.

Several centuries later the missionary efforts of Apostle St. Andrew north of the Black sea became fruitful as a result of the work of the great apostles to the Slavs, Sts. Cyril and Methodius. These two brothers obviously were guided in their labors by the events which took place on the Holy Day of Pentecost when the Orthodox church was born, especially the comments of the visitors in Jerusalem who heard the mighty works of God being taught to them in their "own native language" (Acts 2:8).

Before going to preach to the Slavs, Sts. Cyril and Methodius created a Slavonic alphabet and translated the Gospels and liturgical books into the language of the people to whom they were sent. For their missionary and linguistic efforts these saintly brothers always will have a special place in the hearts and souls of Orthodox Slavs.

The beginnings of Orthodoxy in North America

Beginning in Jerusalem, and for almost twenty centuries since, the commandment of Christ has been obeyed by the Orthodox church: the Christian faith has been planted and harvested in Asia, Africa, Europe, Australia, South America, and North America. Orthodox missions in North America began in Kodiak, Alaska, on September 24, 1794, with the arrival of eight monks from St. Petersburg in the Russian Empire. These monks were sent by Empress Catherine to teach and baptize the native peoples of Alaska. Within two months of their arrival the

monks established the Holy Resurrection Church in Kodiak. From here they extended their labors to the interior of the mainland and to the Aleutian Islands.

Following the example of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, the first Orthodox missionaries in North America created alphabets for the Alaskan natives and translated the Holy Scriptures, liturgical books, and catechism. The chief worker in this field was Father John Veniaminov, who later became Bishop Innocent and, between 1840 and 1858, head of the Diocese of Kamchatka, the Kuriles, and the Aleutians.

From among that first group of eight monks the Orthodox church in America has canonized this continent's first saint — St. Herman of Alaska. For many years he lived among the Aleuts, teaching them both by word and by example. The episcopal address concerning his canonization states:

> The Spiritual Father Herman gave forty years of his life to the service of people. He baptized them, prayed for them and interceded before the authorities for those who had been unjustly treated. His heart was filled with tenderness towards children. He founded an orphanage, a school for them; he was constantly concerned about them and gave them bread. The children themselves were attracted towards their Holy "Apa" (Grandfather) . . . .
>
> He had the eminent gift of convincing and enlightening non-believers. Testimonies have been received of this from highly-educated people, converted to God by the Venerable Spiritual Father, to a living Faith in Christ, to participation in the saving Sacraments of the Holy Church. The grace of God was repeatedly manifested through his prayers. Fires ceased at limits indicated by the Spiritual Father and waters did not rise higher than the place where he laid a holy icon. People were healed from their infirmities through his prayers . . ..
>
> The day of his death was fore-announced from above to the Venerable Spiritual Father Herman; he knew the day of his death and he departed this life while, according to his wish, the Acts of the Apostles were read. The knowledge of the day of one's death has always been considered by the Church as one of the signs of the holiness of the deceased. The remains of the Spiritual Father Herman were preserved until this time at the very place of his death, Spruce Island.
>
> We believe that it was the Will of God to reveal to us on this continent . . . the Blessed Spiritual Father Herman as a sublime example of the Holy Life, for our spiritual benefit, inspiration, comfort and the confirmation of our Faith.[2]

St. Herman was formally canonized on August 9, 1970, in Alaska.

From Alaska the Russian Orthodox missions spread to the United States, especially after the American purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1867. Meanwhile, before the end of the nineteenth century, Orthodox immigrants from East-Central Europe began arriving in Western Canada. Unlike the missions in Alaska and the United States, the Orthodox faith was brought to Western Canda by common people — similar to the fishermen disciples — and not by theologians or trained missionaries.

At the request of the immigrants the Russian Orthodox North American mission sent priests to Canada to minister to the needs of the people. A priest's diary describes a trip from Seattle, Washington, to Alberta by Father Dmitri Damnev in 1897:

> . . . I set out from Seattle on the morning of May 20th, on a mission to the Northwest Territories of Canada. Because of the poor condition of the railways in this part of the country, I arrived in Edmonton . . . some 1,000 miles north of Seattle, only on the evening of May 25th. From Edmonton, one has to travel north . . . on horseback, since this is the northernmost train terminus in North America . . . .
>
> I left Edmonton . . . on the afternoon of . . . May 27th, Trinity Saturday, and I arrived at the "Vostock" colony . . . The ride for over 60 wild, roadless miles is extremely tiring . . .
>
> Having been informed beforehand of my arrival, a large crowd of several hundred people had already come together for the Vigil of the Feast, especially women and children from the most distant farms. I immediately baptized 13 infants. Later, at eight o'clock, I served the vigil and then addressed the people. I heard confessions until midnight, but could not satisfy even half of those who wanted to confess, since many more had arrived. From the sheer exhaustion of that day, I could not sleep that night.
>
> 28 May. Trinity Sunday. At 5:30 A.M., I began to hear confessions until 11:00 o'clock. After blessing water and sprinkling the prepared place with holy water, I began the Divine Liturgy. I celebrated in an open place next to the new church where, next to a large cross, a new table

had been set-up, covered with rugs and linen. There were many people to sing and they sang the melodies of the old country. After the Gospel, I spoke to the people on the origin of the feast (Acts 2). There were more than 400 communicants. After the Liturgy, there was a Vespers Service. The services, which had been attended by at least 2,000 people, came to an end at around four in the afternoon. After a short rest I baptized 25 children. From eight in the evening until midnight, I heard more than 150 confessions.

29 May. Day of the Holy Spirit. Began confessions at five in the morning, continued until ten. There were up to 500 communicants. After the service, I baptized children and served weddings. I served vespers and matins, after which I talked to a delegation from the Northwestern Bukovinian settlement, with whom I agreed to serve as of the first of June.[3]

Father Dmitri, after serving the needs of several other colonies of immigrants in Alberta, arrived back in Seattle on June 16, 1897.

Another account of a priests's visit to a colony is presented in Illia Kiriak's story, *Sons of the Soil*, a tale of Ukrainian immigrant families who attempted to establish themselves on undeveloped land near Shandro, Alberta. Kirak's priest is also a Father Dmitri. As the priest approached the house in which the services were to be held:

. . . Pavlo Dub stood in the doorway with the traditional two loaves of bread and a pinch of salt, and before he realized what was going to happen, Father Dmitri was greeted like a Bishop.

"In the name of this community I greet you, dear Father, according to the old custom, with bread and salt. I welcome you", he said with tears rolling down his cheeks, "and I am very glad that you have taken the opportunity to visit us in these jungles. We left the Old country and came here to live . . ."

Pavlo ended his speech with the word, "live", sticking in his throat . . . Father Dmitri hurriedly kissed the loaves of bread, squeezed past Pavlo into the house to hide his feelings, and prepared himself to accept the confessions of the people . . .

When Father Dmitri started to swing his censor toward them and offer up silent prayers, the atmosphere seemed charged with some powerful force.

Its power was manifest when the Priest pronounced the opening words of the Liturgy: "Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." The choirmaster, Stephan Solowy . . . almost choked on the answering word, "Amen" . . . . When Father Dmitri began to chant, "Christ is risen!" the voices of the choir died away, and they listened in awe to the heaven-inspired message.

Then the tears began to flow, the soft, warm tears of the pious. All joined in singing the Easter song, and sang as if they would never cease . . . .

Before receiving Holy communion, the people renewed friendship kissing each other warmly. After the service, dinner was served outside on the grass. Then they all went to the cemetary, where Father Dmitri offered up a prayer for the dead, sealing the graves and blessing the new church site. At vespers he delivered a long sermon.

Thus ended this great and memorable day in the life of the community.[4]

One of the blessings which has been mine in my life in the Orthodox priesthood is to have shared similar such experiences with the Orthodox pioneers of Western Canada and their children.

In discussing the origins and growth of Orthodox churches in Western Canada, it is necessary to deal with the founding of a most unique jurisdiction, the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada. Most of the early immigrants to Canada from Halychyna or Galicia were Uniats, Greek Catholics under the authority of the Roman Pope. Because of grievances which some of the faithful immigrants in the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Canada had toward their bishop, they arranged a secret meeting in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, on July 18 and 19, 1918. About 150 delegates attended from the three Prairie Provinces and, following two days of meetings, passed a resolution calling for the organization of the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada. This action was unique, because the new ecclesiastical body was created by the people themselves, without any Orthodox missionaries, bishops, or priests. Moreover, at that time the people were not yet members of the Orthodox church. Today the church which they established over 62 years ago is one of the largest Orthodox churches in Canada.

As a result of the missionary zeal of the Apostles and their successors, several hundred million people on this earth today claim membership in the Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Orthodox Church. In 1971, according to the Canadian census, there were 316,610 Orthodox Christians in Canada, of which 116,700 were Ukrainian, 112,005 were Greek, 10,085 were Russian, and interestingly, 9,910 were British. Others were of the following

ethnic origins: French, Czech, Finnish, German, Hungarian, Italian, Jewish, Dutch, Scandinavian, Chinese, Japanese, and native Indian and Eskimo. The same census found there were 47,165 Orthodox faithful in Alberta, 22,000 of whom lived in Edmonton. Ukrainians formed more than 75 percent of the totals in the province and city. Other ethnic backgrounds represented in the province include British, French, German, Italian, Jewish, Dutch, Russian, Greek, Polish, Scandinavian, Asian, and native Indian and Eskimo. The 1972 *Handbook of American Orthodoxy* counted over 500 Orthodox parishes in Canada, with almost one-quarter of them in Alberta.

The spiritual base of Orthodoxy: the Liturgy

Having outlined the historical background to the origin and growth of the Orthodox tradition in Western Canada, let us now consider how the members of that faith relate to their God and to each other; that is, how the tradition functions and lives in the lives of the faithful followers of Jesus Christ.

It is clear that the ultimate way in which Orthodoxy tells its story and establishes its basic authority is by saying that the faithful of all generations have collectively been given the Holy Spirit, from the day of Pentecost forward (and even backwards, in that God related in the same way to the nation of Israel). Thus the ultimate authority, image, or story in Orthodoxy is that of the people of God assembled around the bishop. It is this assembled church which in times past wrote the Holy Scriptures under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and which established and still establishes holy tradition beyond, though not in contradiction to, scripture. Furthermore, it is the council of the church which decided what is scripture.

The gathering together of the people of God is defined in the church by *sobornost*. "In 'sobornost' . . . each member of the Church, equally with the assembly of the members, lives in union with the entire Church, with the Church invisible, which is itself an uninterrupted union with the Church visible and forms its foundations."[5]

Expressed in practical terms, sobornality defines the church as a community founded on love. Therefore, if one member of the community is sad, all are sad; if one rejoices, all rejoice. Each member shares the burdens of others and participates in their joys.

Since the church is most completely the church when the people of God are gathered together, the Holy Liturgy is when the ultimate is brought into focus. All of scripture and tradition exists to aid the faithful in their Liturgy to aid them in being the people of God, both formally on Sunday mornings and, in the larger sense indicated by the term "liturgy", in the work and total lives of the people of God offered as their liturgy to God. St. Paul teaches, "pray without ceasing", meaning not that we should spend 24 hours a day on our knees in formal prayer; rather, that all we do in work, play, community, family, and church should be a prayer.

The central point of Orthodoxy, then, is in the Liturgy which brings us together, enables us to offer our lives as our prayer to God, and preserves the tradition which teaches our faith to succeeding generations through scripture, devotional expression, and the act of participating in worship. As such, Liturgy is a school of theology.

The Orthodox participate in the Divine Liturgy with all their senses: sight, through icons, vestments, and the altar; hearing, through music, readings, and other verbal symbols; touch, through the physical nature of the Holy Mysteries, and veneration of icons and the cross; taste, through the reception of Holy Communion and the *antidoron* (agape) gifts; smell, through incense; and bodily actions through kneeling, standing, crossing oneself, bowing and otherwise physically and attentively participating in the Liturgy. It is not intended that faithful worshippers should be observers of an intellectual exercise or a show, however reverent and holy a show.

An illustration of the effects of worshipping with all of the senses in a spiritually-elevating environment is contained in the report presented by delegates whom Knyaz Volodymyr of Kyivan Rus' sent to investigate the existing religions in the tenth century. The *Primary Chronicle* reports that when the delegates returned to Kiev from Constantinople they testified to Volodymyr: "When we came to the Greeks and were led into the place where they worship their god, we did not know whether we were in Heaven or not. For surely on earth there is not such beauty; there, truly God dwells with them."[6]

The central focus of the Liturgy is the Eucharist, the act of Christ in which he gathers us together in thanksgiving to offer our lives as co-creators and reflections of the image of God, however pale and distorted that reflection might be. In the Eucharist the Lord Jesus establishes his presence in the midst of the faithful even more strongly, bestowing on our humble gifts of bread and wine the overwhelming gift of his loving and effective presence. Through them, he bestows his presence on us and everything in our lives.

A devotee of the Orthodox tradition is introduced to the Ultimate through baptism, by which he is joined to the faithful, generally when he is too young to exercise judgment in that regard. For this reason, baptism is again a gift of God bestowed freely and irrevocably on us. Thus we know that we always belong to God, that we are always the child of God, and that we can always approach him as Father regardless of our straying paths.

The Ultimate is continuously experienced in the Liturgy, in the history of mankind, in the community, and in the life of the individual. This experience of the Ultimate continues through every minute, because the Liturgy is not simply a rite or religious exercise, but the sum total of the individual's life offered in all its imperfection to

God. Likewise, the Liturgy throughout history is the sum total of the offering of humanity to God, again in all its imperfections, while striving towards *theosis*, or deification.

Devotees of Orthodoxy apprehend the Ultimate as a journey which begins at baptism and remains in continuous motion forever, because the Liturgy transcends this life, not just at the point of death, but at all times in that journey. Heaven begins as baptism, even if it is not totally fulfilled until death and resurrection.

Furthermore, all of history is realized eternally in the Liturgy as witnessed by the icons of saints — real people who lived on this earth — surrounding us in an Orthodox church. Therefore, during the Liturgy we call to memory those dear to us who have died and the world-wide community of believers in "all times and places." Even today, the very Liturgy which has endured for these many, many centuries continues to express our own worship.

Father Georges Florovsky summarizes this concept of the historical present in the Eucharist as follows:

> Through the Eucharist, worshippers . . . are taken back to the Upper Room and made participants of the same sacred Supper . . . In the Eucharist, those who are separated and estranged from each other . . . are brought together into the perfect and intimate unity of the One Body of Christ . . . . This unity is not confined or restricted to those who are taking part in a particular celebration on a particular day . . . Every Liturgy is celebrated in Communion with the whole Church . . . in the name and by the authority of the whole church . It is an insight into the universal fellowship of all believers living and departed in Christ, the common Risen Lord.[7]

Similarly, through the historical-present, the faithful are present and participants in the events in the life of the Lord — nativity, baptism, transfiguration — and are not just historical observors.

With this in mind, Orthodox Catholic theological formulation arises primarily from the collected wisdom of the centuries. It is contained in the tradition, which is refined and passed on to us by the collective community of the people of God. The process is continuous, from the past to the present and into the future. In orthodoxy, theological formulation does not lend itself to objective dissection and compartmentalization into isolated pigeon holes. Instead, it is the intelligent relating of the experience of the people of God, and it is the description of the perception and action of those people, and, more so, of their God. It is not the offering of scientific theory or the postulation of philosophical and logical propositions, one upon the other, as in the building of a brick wall. As stated by Bulgakov, "It is not dogma which prescribes Church practice, but the latter which is the foundation of the dogma."[8] He further comments, "It is teaching and not dogma which predominates in Orthodoxy."[9]

Orthodoxy in contemporary Canadian society

Let us now direct our attention to the questions of how Orthodox tradition lives and functions in Western Canada and what dilemmas exist on the margin between the tradition and its current context of the secular culture of Western Canadian society.

The guidelines for adaptation of Orthodox Christianity to new environments were expressed right after the Apostolic Age, in the Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus. Mathetes, who referred to himself as a disciple of the Apostles, wrote:

> For the Christians are distinguished from other men neither by country, nor language, nor the customs which they observe. For they neither inhabit cities of their own nor employ a peculiar form of speech nor lead a life which is marked out by any singularity . . . nor do they proclaim themselves the advocates of any merely human doctrines. But, inhabiting Greek as well as barbarian cities . . . and following the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food and the rest of their ordinary conduct, they display to us their wonderful confessedly striking method of life. They dwell in their own country but simply as sojourners . . . . Every foreign land is to them as their native country, and every land of their birth as a land of strangers . . . . They pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of heaven . . .[10]

The last sentence is the key: Orthodox Christians live in this world, but they are not of this world. Their destination, as they pass through this world, is the Kingdom of God. For almost two thousand years they have encountered and survived the threats and dangers of pagan and secular societies, because they have kept their ultimate goal in mind. This is not surprising since the head of the church, Jesus Christ, proclaimed that the church would survive even the gates of hell.

Nevertheless, as part of the adaptation process, the Orthodox church in Western Canada needs to consider her relations to the state. In his work, *The Orthodox Church*, Sergius Bulgakov, former dean of the Russian Orthodox Theological Academy in Paris, describes the Orthodox viewpoint on church-state relations as a

> "symphony", that is, mutual harmony and independence of the two parts. The state recognized the ecclesiastical law as an interior guide for its activity; the Church considered itself as under the state. This was not a Caesaro-papism in which the ecclesiastical supremacy belonged to the

> Emperor. Caesaro-papism was always an abuse; never was it recognized dogmatically or canonically . . . If that "symphony" became troubled by discord, if the Emperors attempted to impose on the Church dogmatic directions, which sometimes were heresies . . . then the Church thought itself persecuted, and the real nature of its connection with the state became manifest.[11]

At the present time there is much said in Canada about the separation of church and state. However, it is difficult to get a clear definition of what this means. Does it mean that there should be no contact at all between church and state If this is the case, then the state would certainly deny itself the assistance of a positive force in the community. The church is people, and by isolating itself from the church, the state would separate itself from a segment of the population which can make a valuable contribution to the quality of life.

What in fact is happening in Canada, under the guise of the call for a separation of church and state, is the subtle persecution of the church by the state. The subtle attacks are a greater threat to the church than the open persecution in communist countries. Orthodox Christians in Canada are forced to pay taxes in support of such activities as abortion, which are contrary to the teachings of the church. Taxes must be paid in support of public schools which undermine the faith of the Christian public. The state interferes in the life of the church by dissolving marriages which were blessed originally by the church and not the state. Of more concern are the indirect assaults on the church by the state through the immoral and anti-Christian attitudes and environment which it permits in society.

As in past centuries, the Orthodox church in Western Canada will find solutions to the current problems she faces with the state and the advocates of policies or laws which discriminate against her. The real dilemmas faced by the church are not external in nature. The problems are internal and of an organizational and liturgical nature.

In times past, when Orthodox Christians migrated or were forced to flee to another land they organized or established an Orthodox church in and for that country. Because of the peculiar set of circumstances behind the coming of Orthodox Christians to Canada, this has not yet occurred. Instead of one Canadian Orthodox church, there are several Orthodox churches, each based on the ethnic background of its founders.

To further complicate this situation, ethnic churches in Canada have tended to succumb to the status of Caesaro-papism. They have become very much involved in preserving the political life which they left in the Old Country. Church policies, philosophies, and decisions appear to be designed more for maintaining and furthering an earthly kingdom than the Kingdom of God. A study of time spent by churches in spiritual versus political and cultural activities would find much more commitment to the latter than to the former.

As an example of this, an ethnic newspaper several years ago editorialized that if the ethnic church used another language other than the ethnic one, the church would no longer be Orthodox. In other words, the editorial writer was basing the Orthodox faith on the ethnic language and not on the teachings of Jesus Christ.

When many of the pioneer immigrants first came to Canada they hoped to make their million and return to the Old Country. Eventually they had to realize that this was going to be their permanent home; yet their church continues to live here as if she were in the Old Country.

When speaking of a Canadian Orthodox church, it is necessary to define or describe the characteristics of that church. First and foremost, it would have to be an Orthodox church for all Canadians, regardless of their ethnic origins. It would, in the words of Bulgakov, be a "unity in multiplicity, a symphony in which many motives and voices are harmonized."[12] As such, it would need to serve the spiritual needs of Canadians in all of the languages spoken in Canada; that is, it would need to be founded on a multilingual basis.

At the present time, the Government of Canada has reduced Canadians who are not of British or French origin to second-class citizenship. The Canadian Orthodox church would not be Candian or Orthodox if she followed the example of the federal government in Ottawa. In accordance with the events of the first Christian Pentecost, the Candian Orthodox church could not say to someone that he or she must learn an official language in order to be able to communicate with the church.

The decision as to what languaage or languages would be used in a particular parish would be made by the local members, and the church authorities would then be obligated to fulfill that decision. In other words, the establishment of a Candian Orthodox church would not do away with the existing ethnic churches or parishes in Canada. While maintaining and supporting the existing parishes, it would expand the commitment of the church to those Canadians who are now outside the church.

Not surprisingly, the seeds of a Canadian Orthodox church are beginning to take root across Canada. At the present time there are parishes which could be called Canadian Orthodox in Montreal, Quebec; Winnipeg and Lennard, Manitoba; Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; Surrey and Victoria, British Columbia; and Edmonton, Alberta. Other communities have attempted to form in London, Ontario, and Halifax, Nova Scotia.

By her nature, one Canadian Orthodox church would solve the other main dilemma of the church in Western Canada. Mention was made above of the value and significance of the faithful being full participants in the liturgical life of the community. Those who are not fluent in the language of the particular ethnic Orthodox community

are deprived of this basic necessity for spiritual satisfaction and growth in the knowledge of God. Bilingual prayer books do not make one a participant in the Liturgy, only a member of the audience. Those who doubt this need only to attend a Holy Liturgy in a language which they do not understand. In such a situation they might be able to pray, with difficulty, but they cannot take a full and active part in the worshipping community which is assembled there. Moreover, the theology of the Liturgy is lost to them because of the language barrier.

There already is present in Canada most, if not all, of the necessities for a Canadian Orthodox church. There are bishops, priests, people, church buildings, ethnic printing services, and even a seminary within St. Andrew's College in Winnipeg. We are hopeful that the two largest groups in Canada — Ukrainians and Greeks — will provide leadership in establishing an Orthodox church in Canada for all Canadians. In 1988 the millenium of the formal acceptance of the Orthodox faith by Kyivan Rus' from Byzantium will be celebrated. What better way to observe this event in Canada than through the establishment of the Canadian Orthodox church

Since her birth in Jerusalem on Pentecost almost two thousand years ago, the Orthodox church has traveled a long road which has brought her to Western Canada. There is no doubt that the seeds which the original pioneers and immigrants planted in the soil of Canada have taken root. The time is now coming, if it has not already come, for the harvesting to begin in earnest. That harvest will come about through the power and full experience of the Liturgy, as God's people gather together to do the work which Christ commanded them to do when he said: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Matthew 28:18-20). Amen!

FOOTNOTES

1. Ivan Wlasowsky, *Outline History of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church*, (New York: Ukrainian Orthodox Church of U.S.A., 1956), I., p. 20.

2. Constance J. Tarasar, ed., *Orthodox America: 1794 - 1796*, (Syosset, New York: the Orthodox Church in America, 1975), pp. 294 - 295.

3. Ibid., pp. 74 - 76.

4. Illia Kiriak, *Sons of the Soil*, (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1959), pp. 178 - 179.

5. Sergius Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church*, (Maitland, Florida: Three Hierarchs Seminary Press, 1935), p. 76.

6. Wlasowsky, *Ukrainian Orthodox Church*, p. 26.

7. Mother Mary and Kallistos Ware, *The Festal Menaion*, (London, Faber and Faber, 1969), pp. 35 - 36.

8. Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church*, p. 82.

9. Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church*, p. 119.

10. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdman's Publishing Company, 1956) I, pp. 26 - 27.

11. Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church*, pp. 182 - 183.

12. Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church*, pp. 112.

The author wishes to acknowledge with gratitude the contribution of Fr. Winfield S. Mott of Victoria, B.C., to this paper.

TAD W. GUZIE

ROMAN CATHOLICISM

Catholic Christianity began some two thousand years ago in an unimportant, politically insignificant, backwater country of the Middle East. The religion consisted of a small group of people, almost all of them unlettered, who believed that a dead man would soon return in glory — a man who had been executed as a common criminal and who in everyone else's eyes was a failure. Many of his followers did not even know the man Jesus during his lifetime. Many of them quit their jobs in order to wait and be fully prepared for his imminent return.

A thousand years later, every lettered and learned person in the Western world, along with princes, kings, and emperors, claimed the names "Catholic" and "Christian". Few people quit their jobs anymore in expectation of the man's return. On the contrary, you could not get anywhere in the business world or climb the ladder of worldly success unless you were identified as a Catholic Christian. Your initiation into this religion gave you the fullest membership in society.

This series is called "Traditions in Transition". For some Catholics today, the phenomenon of transition is a new and disturbing thing. This is because, for some Catholics, tradition refers only to the way their parents or grandparents believed and worshipped. But many of the ways of doing things that appear new or radical to some contemporary Catholics were old hat in an earlier age. For Catholics who have picked up their religious education where it left off back in grammar school, one major insight has often been the discovery that Catholic Christianity is a much broader and more pluralistic tradition than they had realized.

In fact, as I have implied in the contrast I sketched above, Catholic Christianity has been in transition ever since it came into being. It began during the Roman Empire, was an illegal religion for several centuries, and then became the emperor's religion. It passed through the Dark Ages and the demographic transformation of Europe, the medieval world, the Renaissance, the discovery of the American continents, and the scientific, industrial, and technological revolutions of the past three centuries. It still exists down the street at a parish church where Catholic's gather to do something they consider important.

This paper will center on just one aspect of this vast history, namely, the Catholic tradition of gathering for worship. Even this topic has to be narrowed down. Worship in someone's living room in second-century Rome did not resemble a solemn pontifical celebration in the Rome of the Renaissance popes, and neither of these gatherings has much resemblance to a Sunday celebration in a parish church in Western Canada today. I shall not discuss the external forms of Catholic worship, because these have changed from age to age. I shall focus instead on the rationale which, in every age, has brought Catholic Christians together for worship. Much of it has to do with a certain human rhythm, a cycle of living that is both secular and sacred. I like to think of it as the rhythm that makes life human, and in talking about it I shall give both religious and everyday examples.[1]

The beginnings of Catholic worship

Like every religion, Christianity began with an experience. In the case of Christianity, a group of men and women had their lives turned around by a carpenter's son. Many centuries later an English poet would put these words on that experience:

> Let him easter in us, be a dayspring to the dimness of us,
> be a crimson-cresseted east,
> More brightening her, rare-dear Britain, as his reign rolls,
> Pride, rose, prince, hero of us, high-priest,
> Our hearts' charity's hearth's fire, our thoughts'
> chivalry's throng's Lord.
>
> Gerard Manley Hopkins, "The Wreck of the Deutschland"

The first followers of the man from Nazareth had still other titles for him: Son of Man, Saviour, Messiah, Anointed One, the Christ. They had their own words for telling their story, and their many stories were finally pulled together into the book we call the New Testament. Paul tells his version differently from John. Despite the variations, the first followers always seemed to tell their story with the same excitement and sense of exaltation, even breathlessness, conveyed by those lines from Gerard Manley Hopkins.

So much was Jesus a man of God that his followers came to call him by the godly name of "Lord", that climactic and ringing word at the end of Hopkins' poem. In their "easter" experience the followers of Jesus recognized him as a man so fully *from* God and so fully *for* God that they had to change their ideas about God. God had now shown his face in the person of Jesus, and shown it so vividly that all their notions of God had to be widened to include their experience of Jesus.

Eventually dogmas would develop, hammered out through the course of many centuries and many arguments about how best to express Jesus' relationship to the Father. But in the beginning, Jesus' followers were not preoccupied with ideas *about* him. And this was always a story of how Jesus "eastered" in them, how he was a dayspring to their dimness.

When something exciting happens, it is human to celebrate. To do so, we spontaneously turn to what is familiar. Old rituals take on new meanings when an intensely lived experience is brought to them. A ritual like a family dinner somehow becomes something new and larger when it celebrates new life, a birth, a rebirth, a reconciliation.

So it was for the first followers of Jesus. Water baptism was one ritual already at hand, well known to the first-century world, the followers of Jesus quickly adopted it to express their entrance into the mystery of Jesus and their sense of a new beginning, of a new spirit let loose in their midst.

There was another ritual at hand, known to a number of Jewish groups in Jesus' time. We read of it in documents left behind by some of the monastic communities who lived in the deserts of Palestine. It was a meal of bread and wine, which looked forward to the coming of the Messiah and to the feast that would be held on that great day. On the eve of his death, Jesus gave this ritual a new significance. He charged it with the meaning of his own life, ministry, and death — his sharing, breaking, and outpouring of himself. So we are not surprised to read that his followers, right from the beginning, met in one another's homes for the "breaking of the bread." (Acts 2).

This was another form of telling their story. They had other rituals and other gatherings for prayer, but breaking the bread and sharing the cup were a unique way of remembering Jesus. Not remembering things *about* him, as though they were nostalgically recalling the past — what they remembered around the table was that the great day of the Lord was that day, and the Lord Jesus was then and there "eastering" in them.

The dynamics of worship

What we observe here is a very normal and profoundly human dynamic: an important experience is retold in story and remembered in festivity. The retelling and remembering in turn help us to re-enter everyday lived experience with a sense of refreshment and a new sense of purpose.

The same kind of thing happens at family celebrations such as anniversaries, birthdays, and reunions. Famous family stories are retold (Remember the time when Uncle George's teeth fell into the soup). The same games are played (Let's play charades, like we did last year). The same songs are sung (Happy birthday; Happy anniversary, and the one that Grandma always likes). The cake is cut and shared, on the same best dishes. No one ever leaves such celebrations without a renewed awareness of who they are, for good or for ill, as a family. Such festivity can pick us off our feet and return us to everyday life with new eyes.

The experiences of life are not at once "lived" experiences. Reflection, whereby an event or experience is related to the meaning of one's life, must first come into play. There are disagreeable or painful experiences that never become truly "lived" experiences because we lay them aside or even try to repress them. Even what appear to be happy times are not automatically "lived" experiences. Sometimes years go by before we appreciate and fully own the significance of a joyful moment shared with a friend, and sometimes what appears to be happy times later turn out to have been superficial or insignificant.

Storytelling is our most basic way of reflecting on our experiences. If you and I are friends who sit down to chat, and if we get talking about important things that have happened since we last saw each other, invariably we will tell stories. But suppose you tell me about a friend who did something significant and loving for you, and I start philosophizing about the nature of friendship, with no touch of my own story in it. You could hardly resist looking at your watch and getting away as quickly as possible. Or if I share with you an experience of suffering that I am trying to own, and you answer with an analysis of the meaning of suffering, with little of yourself in it, I could barely resist telling you to go find a pulpit somewhere (which is not a happy comment on what goes on in pulpits). Not that there is anything wrong with philosophical discourse. It just belongs to another context.

Such examples indicate that we do not first formulate our lived experiences into abstraction which provide firm answers. When an experience comes to have significance related to our lives, we put it into story form. Storytelling is our most spontaneous and basic way of naming an experience.

We need a context for storytelling, and festivity provides a pre-eminent one. Telling stories is an integral part of the festivity at a reunion or any other family celebration. Stories about Jesus were told and retold when the first Christians gathered for their celebrations, and there were many versions right from the beginning. It seems that a great many of the stories found in the Bible took shape in the context of worhip. Were it not for religious festivity, many stories about Moses, Elijah, or Jesus would not have been remembered and eventually written down. In our own families, few stories would be remembered if it were not for times of festivity.

This is how the scriptures relate to worship. The liturgy of the Word is a natural part of any religious celebration, because festivity calls for storytelling. The liturgy of the Word is the time when the larger story, our common Christian story, is proclaimed so that worshippers may enter into the story more fully in their own personal histories.

The sacraments are also built around stories. The centre of every Mass is the Eucharistic prayer, the great prayer of thanksgiving for God's goodness and love. At the heart of this prayer is the story of Jesus' last supper with his friends, a story which tells why we are now giving thanks and breaking bread in this way. The blessing of water at baptism is also a story, telling of the waters of creation, the great flood, the Red Sea, the Jordan, and the water flowing from the pierced side of Christ.

Festivity, the third element in the cycle, is so important that the rhythm of human life is simply incomplete without it. There are few experiences more depressing than being with people who never celebrate, either because they are too busy to make time for it, or, more depressing still, because they find nothing in their lives to celebrate.

If story names our lived experience, festivity frames it. We need to step back from the stories we are living, the history we are making, in order to see it all in a setting that makes it visible. Our lived experience and stories go on from day to day, like a flowing landscape with both bright and blighted spots, but we often miss the most striking points of the landscape until we see it "framed" in a good photograph or painting. In the festive moment we see it "framed" in a good photograph or painting. In the festive moment we take a recess from the demands of story-making in order to frame and see better the stories we are living.

> Celebration reminds us that there is a side of our existence that is not absorbed in history-making, and therefore that history (including one's personal story) is not the exclusive or final horizon of life. As both an affirmation of history making and a temporary respite from it, festivity reminds us of the link between two levels of our being — the instrumental-calculating side, and the expressive, playful side. Festivity periodically restores us to our proper relationship to history and history-making. It reminds us that we are fully within history, but that history also is within some thing else.[2]

The "something else" within which our own histories lie is what the sacraments are meant to hold open to the Christian. The sacraments are festive actions in which Christians assemble to celebrate their lived experience and to call to heart their common story. The purpose of this kind of worship is precisely to become more aware of the "something else", the larger mystery which surrounds us.

I have spent time on the cycle of experience-story-festivity because it is essential for understanding Catholicism's emphasis on the life of the sacraments, or the sacraments in life. The church's sacraments are founded on the human need to celebrate, to be festive. Festivity should not be understood only as a time of joy and laughter. Death needs to be celebrated; that is why there are funeral rites. Sickness is a profound experience that needs to be acknowledged; that is why there is a sacrament of the sick. Reconciliation after a rupture is often a long and painful process, but like sickness it is an experience that calls for celebration; that is why there is a sacrament of penance, or reconciliation. Celebration, in other words, includes tears as well as laughter. Sometimes a good cry that wells from the heart is exactly what is needed to bring to term a portion of one's story, so that life can go on.

The unity of the festivity cycle

No religion ignores the cycle I have been describing, but not all religions are equally attentive to the element of festivity. Some branches of Christianity, for example, wear quite a long face and celebrate little. Still others place their primary emphasis on long sermons and matters of the intellect and will. the practice of Catholicism, on the other hand, has always been characterized by frequent and regular festivity. Indeed, if one were to speak of the particular genius of Catholic Christianity, I would not hesitate to say that a large part of that genius consists in the recognition that festivity lies at the heart of life and therefore that celebration is the heart of religion.

But celebration is not an end in itself. Festivity is part of an integral cycle, and trouble arises when it gets detached from the cycle.

We all perform rituals without knowing why we do them. Why do we hide eggs on Easter? What do bunnies have to do with Easter? Why do we cut down trees and put them in our homes to dry out at Christmas time? Why do we put candles on cakes? We don't know where some of these practices came from, because we have lost the story originally associated with the ritual.

This is the problem that Paul was faced with during the earliest decades of the Christian experience. They were not perfect, those first followers of Jesus. Paul's letters remind us that an ideal church (thank God!) never existed.

The community at Corinth, for example was doing some singularly un-Christian things when they met for the Lord's Supper. Some got drunk, and the more affluent were not sharing their food with the poor. Like one of those painful family gatherings where one person is in need and another talks only of how much he has made on the stock market, the Corinthians were split into factions. Paul had to remind them that they were, together, the Lord's own body, that they should remember who they were as church and recollect why they came together to break bread and share the cup (1 Cor. 11).

Festivity had lost its moorings: the ritual had lost its story. So Paul had to remind the Corinthians of the story they were forgetting: how on the same night that he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread and thanked God for it and broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you" (1 Cor. 11:24). In his letter to Corinth, Paul was calling for a process of reflection which every age after him would have to carry on. A ritual like eating and drinking together is plastic, it can take on any number of meanings. Paul's concern was that the community recognize the distinctively Christian meaning of coming together to break bread.

"Remember your story, and so make sense of your rituals. Your festivity will then lead you further into Christian experience." This is one way of summing up Paul's sacramental message to the Corinthians, and each age of Christians has had to deal in its own way with the same admonition.

The situation that Paul was coping with has its parallels in everyday life. Festivity is one moment in a cycle, and unless the other elements of the cycle are at work, festivity is bound to lose its footing and its meaning. Everyone has had the experience of going to a gathering where there are all the externals of a celebration — people, food, drink, candles, and cakes — and yet the feast is a flop.

Often this is because there is really nothing to celebrate. One need only think of the emptiness of many a New Year's Eve Party. Particularly if Christmas has been well celebrated, New Year's Eve is more often an excuse for festivity than a natural opportunity within the flow of the cycle we have been looking at. Office parties can be similarly devastating, especially for the spouses of the employees. If there is no real story to share, or if no common lived experience lies behind the festivity, one is left with nothing but the trappings of festivity (and perhaps some desperate games).

Festivity therefore is never an end in itself. Festivity flows out of life and back into life. We always celebrate something, and that something is rooted in the first two elements of the cycle.

Another example of festivity detached from its natural cycle is a celebration which tries to substitute for a lived process. A family attempts this kind of thing when it uses a celebration to cover over unhealed ruptures among its members. Again there are the external trappings of festivity — people, wine, and a well-laid table — but if recognition of a rupture, then healing and reconciliation are needed among those who sit around the table, the feast can only be painful. Festivity in itself does not heal. It can and should celebrate a healing process which ought to have begun elsewhere.

For any church whose tradition is rich in ritual, there will always be the temptation to ritualize without sufficient preparation. Theologians speak of the danger of "sacramentalizing without enough evangelizing". The problem here is nothing other than festivity detached from its natural human cycle.

Here is where we meet the problem of superstition or magic. Not a few Christians expect the sacraments to do something for them automatically, with only a minimal receptivity on their own part. Festivity always celebrates something, and that something is rooted in the first two elements of the cycle. Sacraments celebrate something, and that something has to do with the love of God, experienced and related to the same magic that some expect from a party where there is nothing to celebrate or from a family feast that tries to substitute for a larger healing process. Thus, if people are not living the Christian story or if they do not see their own experience in relation to that story, then the sacraments can only be exercises in superstition.

Ritual and renewal

Times of renewal in the church can be seen as times when the cycle of experience-story-festivity is rediscovered or examined anew. In the Roman Catholic tradition, worship and the sacraments had gone their own way for several centuries without any basic reforms. This is another story, which I do not have room for now.

In any case, the problem of liturgical reform, including the correction of misapprehensions and superstitious tendencies, was the first problem addressed when the Second Vatican Council opened in 1962. That council ordered that all of the Catholic church's rituals be re-examined and reformed. As a result, the Roman Catholic

church, along with many other Christian churches, now has a whole new set of liturgical books. The commissions that worked on these revisions knew the right questions to ask: What is the Easter experience we are celebrating? What aspect of the whole Christian story does each rite try to celebrate? Where have our old rites missed the mark? How can we most authentically celebrate our common story in forms that are congenial not to the medieval church but to people of the twentieth century? These are the kinds of questions that entered into the preparation of the new liturgical books of the Roman Catholic church.

But revising books is much easier than revising people. A decade and a half after the Vatican Council, Catholics have become aware that a whole new set of attitudes has to accompany the new rites — and forming new attitudes is often a painful process. It takes time for the new and the old to come together comfortably. For a good while we stand with one foot planted in each camp. This seems to describe where Catholics stand in relation to worship and the sacraments as we move into the last quarter of the twentieth century. All of our rites have been rewritten, but we bring to them a mixture of attitudes flowing from two different schools of thought.

The old school emphasizes the grace, the share in God's love, which a sacrament brings to the individual soul, and the right disposition each person needs in order to receive that grace. The new school stresses celebrating rather than receiving, the assembly which celebrates rather than the individual, and the lived faith-experience which is being celebrated.

The old school tends to see the initiative of God toward ourselves as so intimately linked with the church's sacramental system that grace is liable not to happen for a person unless a sacrament is received. The new school sees the initiative of God toward us as a grace that is already present in the world through the fact of Jesus Christ. This grace, this love of God, is celebrated but not first contacted in the sacraments.

One view holds that we are all sinners, and we come to the celebration of a sacrament in order to receive something we do not possess, namely, the grace of God. The other view insists that if we are all sinners, we are also graced sinners. We are never in the position of not being loved by God. We come together to celebrate that love, not to get something which is absent from us. We come together to savor that love, to remember its presence, and to go away from the sacrament with a deeper appropriation of the love that surrounds us with every breath we take.

The old school places great weight on the presence of the Lord at the moment of sacramental celebration. The new school wants to emphasize that the problem is not the Lord's presence to us, but rather our presence to him. This is what any sacramental celebration tries to overcome — not God's distance from us, because there is none, but rather our distance from God and our unawareness of the love that is there for us.

Let me return to the theme of this series, Traditions in Transition. Many Christian churches, for reasons that have to do with their own histories, maintain that the Bible, especially that portion of it known as the New Testament, is the only final source of Christian doctrine. As for Roman Catholicism, it has immense respect for the Word of God contained in the Scriptures. In fact, the renewal flowing from the Second Vatican Council has generated among Catholics a whole new attentiveness to the message of the scriptures.

But Catholicism has always balked at the idea that the Scriptures, completed in the first century A.D., are the only definitive source of God's revelation to humankind. In response to the challenges raised by the Reformation in the sixteenth century, Roman Catholicism insisted that lived tradition must be taken into account along with the Scriptures. The written Scriptures are themselves the tradition of the first century Christians. The Christian scriptures are tradition, and tradition itself is an ongoing process of transition from one cultural form to the next — from a world where people quit their jobs because the Lord Jesus was returning tomorrow to a world where a Roman Catholic pope, born and nurtured in Poland, travels around the world and receives instant press attention for the least of his utterances.

For Roman Catholicism, tradition is transition, and I cannot find a time in Catholic history when tradition and transition to something new have not gone hand in hand.

FOOTNOTES

1. In this paper I am borrowing some pages from my forthcoming book, *The Book of Sacramental Basics*, to be published by Paulist Press (New York) in 1981.

2. Harvey Cox, *The Feast of Fools*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 46.

WALTER FREITAG

THE PROTESTANT TRADITION

In the history of Christendom, as in that of men and of nations, certain moments occur which are so electrifying as to take away one's breath. At such times it is as if past, present, and future stand on the very doorstep of the life of Everyman.

One such moment arrived in the sixteenth century, when one man ignited the torch of Christian liberty. By way of tracts, word of mouth, and preaching to peasants, burghers, nobles, and princes, its flame spread like wildfire across Germany and then to the whole of middle and northern Europe. The man — Martin Luther.[1] His quest — the search for a gracious God. His hope — that he might be justified before God in order to be redeemed. His was an epic spiritual struggle, a struggle that put before the Roman Catholic church the challenge of fundamental reform.[2]

Martin Luther was not the only reformer: Hus preceded him; Calvin and Zwingli were contemporary with him; Wesley, Knox, and others were to flourish after him.[3] Yet when all is said and done, it is acknowledged that the Protestant Reformation essentially turned on a spiritual conflict at the vortex of which stood the Augustinian monk, Martin Luther.

Given that recognition, given that the Protestant movement describes a number of churches which emerged during and after the Reformation, and since it is not possible to do justice to all of these communions, we shall use Lutheranism as a model of Protestantism in this lecture.

The Catholic Church of the sixteenth century

If we are able to gain some comprehension of Luther's spiritual struggle, it is important to put Romanism into rather sharp relief, to try to describe what the Roman church had become by and in the sixteenth century.

In outward appearance, the church of the Latin rite appeared to be firmly established at the beginning of the second half of the second millenium A.D. It enjoyed enormous prestige and power, not only among its adherents, but also through its relationships with petty states, major nations, and the Holy Roman Empire. It had survived the conciliar controversy of the eleventh century, from which the papacy emerged supreme. It had embraced the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas, thus supporting its dogma with systematic force. It had assumed the imperial power of the two swords, whose prerogatives gave it jurisdiction over both spiritual and political realms. It had organized itself as a sacramental institution of salvation by which it exercised unparalleled authority, through an army of servants in the ecclasiastical hierarchy, over the entire lifespan of every believer.

But on the inside, beneath the skin, the body Catholic was riddled with intrigue, ambition, greed, and pride. The papacy had embarked upon ambitious programs involving huge sums of money. Among these was the planned construction in Rome of St. Peter's Cathedral, an edifice which was to reflect its role as the principal church in Christendom. The need for money embroiled the Catholic church in financial dealings with the relatively new banking institutions and the consequent assumption of colossal debts. Archbishoprics and other benefices no longer went to the most capable or experienced but to the highest bidder. The sale of sacred relics was promoted, especially among the rich and powerful. The system of granting indulgences was elaborated an refined so as to extract the maximum monetary return. A jubilee indulgence was promulgated in order to pay for the construction of St. Peter's Cathedral. Various awards, honors, and other forms of commendation were utilized to recognize persons who had materially aided the interests of the church. Patronage no less than nepotism stalked the corridors of power.[4]

The effect of this, and more, on the common man was massive. While the rhetoric of Christianity may have been retained, the life to which he was directed no longer appeared to have much to do with faith in Jesus Christ. It had to do instead with a way of life guided, regulated and administered by the ministerial orders of the Roman Church. The ordained clergy[5] exercised profound control over every believer by way of six sacraments: baptism, confirmation, penance, Eucharist, marriage, and extreme unction.[6]

More particularly, the sacrament of penance had been developed into an elaborate system under the jurisdiction of canon law.[7] Every member of the Catholic church was exhorted to go to private confession and declare his sins to the priest. The priest thus became not only privy to the secrets of the community, but also the adjudicator of the pennance to be applied in each case, in accordance with the gravity of the sin confessed.

The life of every adherent of the church, upon penalty of loss of his ultimate salvation, was directed toward perfection, toward a way of living which would earn him, by way of works, sufficient merit to be saved.[8] That in itself was serious enough, but when even that was undercut and subverted by the sale of indulgences — whose purchase purported to forgive sins of the present, of the past, and even of purgatory — the church entered a path which could lead only to confusion among the laity and to spiritual and moral deterioration. If the church

had long since become an institution of salvation, it then became a commercial enterprise selling off the gospel at far below cost.[9]

Luther's spiritual development

That was the spiritual milieu in which Luther grew up. When he abandoned his plan to become a lawyer and chose to follow the religious vocation, he could scarcely have known or sensed his future, nor could he have envisaged the struggle that was to embroil him in titanic conflict with the Roman hierarchy. What he did apprehend, perhaps at a level beyond articulation, was the relentless demand upon him to live a life of such obedience that his salvation would be assured.[10]

He pursued that goal to a degree that made him the despair of his confessor and superiors.[11] He tried every avenue made available to him by the church — incessant confession, vigils, fasting, prayer, meditation, self-flagellation — driving himself to the limits of his will and energy. Yet neither his mind nor his heart found any surcease. Peace eluded him and serenity escaped his grasp altogether.

During this period, when Luther was extending himself to the utmost to satisfy what he understood to be the demands of a holy and righteous God, his advisers assigned him to further academic study, first for his master's degree and then for his doctorate. During the course of this work Luther for the first time gained access to and earnestly studied the Bible. He was posted as a teacher, initially lecturing on the Psalms and then on the epistle to the Romans. In the process of preparing lectures on this epistle, that faith which was to be his bulwark throughout his life took hold of him and would not let him go. He felt that he had become a new man and had entered through an open door into paradise itself.[13]

At bottom, the quest of Martin Luther had to do with soteriology, the doctrine of salvation. For him the question was, "How is a man to be saved, to be justified before God?" The answer given Luther on the basis of biblical testimony was that a man is saved only by the sheer grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ. Neither an individual nor all men together could do even so much as cooperate with God in coming to faith. No human work merited salvation. There is simply no way for mankind to satisfy or appease a just and holy God for the sins of man. Indeed, to suppose that to be the case is to accept a theology of glory — the belief that one could by works of merit ascend a Jacob's ladder to the very gates of heaven.[14] It dawned on Luther that it is impossible.

Since men cannot save themselves no matter what they do or how hard they try, only God is able to intervene and make salvation possible. That is just what he did. On the grounds of his love and compassion, God sent us his Son, to be born of a woman, to share our humanity, to suffer, to be crucified, to die, and to be resurrected on our behalf. Thus did Jesus Christ become the victor over sin and our Saviour, through whom God will forgive our sin. God's descent in Christ, not the Roman road of ascent to perfection, is the only way for any man to be saved.

Luther and the Holy Scriptures

This is perhaps the best place to speak of the significance of the Holy Scriptures for Luther. Once he was persuaded that God's redemptive act in Christ was the one thing necessary for every man, and justification by faith alone the only way for any man to be redeemed, he had exposed the Roman Catholic church's central point of vulnerability. If the church could be shown wrong at this point, the whole structure of Catholic doctrine and practice would fall like a house of cards. The battle lines were swiftly drawn. The defenders of the Catholic position argued that the church alone possessed teaching authority in spiritual matters, authority based on the Scriptures and the accumulated tradition of the fathers of the church.[15] Luther responded that the Scriptures alone were the standard against which all dogma, tradition, and teaching had to be measured. The Bible, he maintained, stands supreme over doctrine, conciliar decisions, and papal decretals.[16]

Over and above that, however, the Scriptures were to be honored and esteemed because they were the cradle of Christ. In and through them we are drawn into the presence of the one who is the Word of God. The scriptures tell us of the Word of God, who was with God from the beginning, who spoke through the prophets, who suffered and died and rose for our sakes, who meets us in preaching, and who will return in glory at the final summation.[17]

Luther backed up his conviction with deeds. Before his life ended he translated the Scriptures into the language of the people and produced the German Bible. As he wrote, Luther shaped the German language. He put his edition of the Holy Scriptures into the hands of ordinary Christians. That Bible has not been superceded in Germany to this time.[18]

That enormous contribution in itself would have been more than enough to ensure Luther a solid place in history. Yet it is clear that idea did not occur to him. He performed that service solely because of his concern that the people should be able to have access to the book in which Christ is proclaimed. Philip Watson writes that for Luther the scripture was the Old Testament, the New Testament having been written down after the fact. That is to say, the New Testament was originally a proclamation of the gospel, the announcement of God's great love

for man through Christ Jesus. It was evangelical preaching. The Word who is Christ is alive, dynamic, and powerful for all eternity. The Word exists throughout the Scriptures and is ever present in the gospel which is preached. For that reason the New Testament is not to be simply read as a book, but is to be announced, related, proclaimed, heralded — that is to say, preached. Christ meets Everyman in the preached Word. Through preaching, the living Word who is Christ becomes present and lives among us.

Rarely in human history has anyone dug so deeply into and tested the soundness of the foundations upon which men build. Luther did that and more.

> For, having discovered the traditional foundations to be insecure, he has gone on to lay bare the living rock on which Christianity stands, and to demand a reconstruction of the entire spiritual life on this basis. He cannot, in the nature of the case, be content with any modifications of its existing structure, however far-reaching they may be, so long as it remains standing on the old ground. In other words, no reformation of ecclesiastical institutions, rites and ceremonies, manners and morals, will suffice, if their doctrinal basis is left unreformed.[20]

Faith and Worship

It is necessary to underline and emphasize that Luther did not argue that there were no Christians in the church of his day, nor that the love of God was totally absent from earth. Rather, Romanism, measured in terms of the gospel, had become a false religion. That is why he attacked it so fiercely, to the glory of God.

At bottom, the question is so simple that it is astonishing: "Who stands at the center of things, God or man?" Is faith egocentric, centred in man and man alone? If faith is theocentric, if God is truly allowed to be God, then it is obvious that salvation is possible only by the sheer grace of God in Christ. To be reconciled to God by faith alone, in and through the living Word, is to let God have his way with us. Only that is true religion.

True worship, therefore, is not the offering of sacrifices to appease an angry God, nor the presentation to God of our pious devotion, deeds of loving kindness, works of merit, or even our spiritual religiosity. Nor is true worship making pilgrimages, fasting, engaging in vigils of prayer, doing penance, buying relics, adopting the monastic habit, or joining in the pageantry of religious festivals, as if by so doing one were faithful. Nor is true worship tithing, donating gifts to charitable causes, or doing neighborly things, if such actions are done because one feels compelled to do them or because the doing of them brings recognition, respect, honor, or reward. Nor is it true worship if we go to church, support its causes, and take part in its activities because that makes us feel better, helps us to cope with our problems, assists us to operate more effectively in the secular world, strengthens us in the moral life, or promises us success or reward in life. True worship has to do not with what a person or any collective group does before God; it has to do with what God does in relation to and on behalf of man, through Christ who is the Living Word.

The service is now called the communion service. Until recent times it was called the service of the Word, which I prefer. The entire service is organically centred on the Word — and thus the sermon — in which Christ becomes present among us. It is begun with the confession of sin, for that is all we can bring of ourselves to God. Consequently, we ask at the very beginning for his forgiveness, through Jesus Christ, of our sin. That is followed by praise to God and by reading aloud the scriptures: the Old Testament, the testimony of the epistles, and the gospel of the day. Then follows the sermon, the preaching of the Word who is Christ. Confession of faith, prayers, hymn singing, and celebration of the Lord's Supper gives further expression to the Word present among us.

True worship, so understood, lets God be God — one who in holy judgment and divine love stands against our egocentricity and self-centredness, who descends in compassion and mercy to us in his Word so that our sin might be forgiven and we might become his children. All this is done by grace alone, through faith, without any merit or worthiness on our part. For us, faith is God's gift, and the whole of Christian life and work, no less than our worship, is nothing but utter thanksgiving for that gift. If our lives belong to him because of the Living Word, then all living, including our dying, becomes a matter of unending gratitude to God. Worship is to give God alone the glory, to thank him, to bless him, to pray to him, to praise him, to submit to him, in joy and sorrow, in war and peace, for the present and for the future. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life " (John 3:16).

The churches of the Reformation are confessional churches:[21] they have set down their evangelical faith in the form of written doctrinal statements. These confessions are honored in the Protestant church because these statements publicly say what is believed. They are documents which express the content of faith, and they show us how the life and work of Jesus Christ transforms and informs our minds and hearts with regard to God, man sin, grace, law, gospel, the church, the world, and related matters.

The Lutheran church in Canada

In Canada, Lutheranism was originally represented by no less than nine different church bodies. In general, they reflected the ethnic diversity of the immigrants who came to our country. There were three Norwegian

Lutheran denominations, three German, one Icelandic, one Swedish, and one Danish.[22] During the past century that number has been reduced to three by way of merger.

There was so much diversity among these Lutheran constituencies that one was led to wonder whether any unity or harmony could possibly exist between them. Some had a simple, freely-structured worship service, others a more formal liturgy. In one church the pastor wore no vestments, in another the Geneva gown with tabs, in another the Geneva gown with *rosenkranz*, in still another the robe, cassock, and stole. At that time Lutherans were ethnically exclusive Europeans transplanted into Canadian soil. They clung to their old ways, spoke their mother tongues, preserved their customs and traditions, developed a survival ethic, and suffered from the ghetto psychology that has afflicted immigrants the world over. Their religion was the religion of the motherland.

However, the personnel, organization, and government of the church were supplied from the United States and reflected the more advanced cultural patterns of the parent U.S. churches. Those churches saw the Canadian territory as part and parcel of the American mission. Their work here was not a foreign mission, but the conversation and preservation of Lutherans of a specific ethnic background for Lutheranism. Those churches exported to Canada not just the controversies which had divided them in the United States, but also American customs in organization, stewardship, lay education, catechetical material, religious literature, and ethical norms.[23]

European influences

Beyond that, it can be shown that the Lutheran churches in our country were especially influenced by two movements originating in Europe: orthodox reprisination theology, and the pietist awakening. The repristinators put emphasis on doctrine in the Lutheran churches of Europe, in reaction to the emerging secular world of knowledge. In particular, they sprang to the defense of the Scriptures, which were being undermined by such developments as the Darwinian theory of evolution. This period in Lutheranism stressed the identity of the Word of God with the Bible, on the grounds that God is ultimately the author of the Scriptures, and the Bible is therefore unique. Further, since each doctrine is derived directly from that infallible Bible, pure doctrine is the church's greatest treasure and surest bulwark against secular learning or any other danger. This movement was a protest against laxity in doctrine, against too liberal an attitude towards secular learning, and against every threat of like kind. It was polemical, militant, and agressive, striving to keep the church faithful. It must also be acknowledged that this movement took great risk in that the detailed and deep knowledge of doctrine virtually assured salvation. As a confession of faith it stood in acute danger of becoming a religion of perfection through mind and intellect. We may call it the religion of right doctrine.[24]

The pietist movement, on the other hand, was an extremely powerful reaction to orthodoxy. Weary of doctrinal controversies among the theologians, tired of doctrinal hair-splitting among pastors and clergy, the laity yearned for a return to a simple Christianity of the heart. Generally rebuffed by the Lutheran state church, laymen met in their own homes. There they shared their troubles, confessed their sins to each other, read their Bibles, sang hymns, and prayed together. This also explains the development of the prayer house, testimony, home devotions, and the religion of the laity. These people developed, in rough and ready fashion, strict codes of moral behavior to deal with the problems they faced. Even when the church was more open to it, the movement was anticlerical, anti-sacramental, and anti-state church. The pietist movement disliked clerical vestments, the formal liturgy, and the classical hymnology of orthodoxy. It was also interested in establishing foreign missions all over the world, indeed, it was the prime mover in this regard. This protest against religion of the intellect tended to become a way of salvation through conduct and behavior. If a Christian lived as he should, he would be saved. This way of perfection we may call the religion of the right way.[25]

In Canada, this inheritance was all the more difficult, in terms of transmission, because Lutheran churches in our country represented mixtures of both pietism and orthodoxy. As a result there are powerful undercurrents in Canadian Lutheranism understanding the Christian life to mean living the right way on the basis of pure doctrine, with doctrine supporting practice and practice supporting doctrine.[26] This is a complex dilemma with which Lutheranism in our country is only now beginning to come to terms.

The current situation of the church

The evangelical Lutheran churches in Canada have but recently emerged from their continental and American cocoons and started to move in the direction of independence from foreign alliances. Mergers have reduced the number of Lutheran church bodies to three, and that may in the not too distant future be reduced to two. While they have begun the task of addressing themselves to Canadian issues, problems, and social concerns, they have only begun the process of discerning, at the deepest levels of conviction and belief, their mission in Canada.

Today, Protestantism in common with the other branches of Christendom faces the momentous challenge of speaking to a secular age, to a cultural and social milieu which supposes that it can do without God — if there is a God. That part of the globe on which we live is affluent, materialistic, egocentric, and permissive. It has embraced not only the technology of science, but also the myth of scientific wisdom. It has burdened men and women with the doctrine that the individual is autonomous, independent, free, and responsible only for himself.

It has made man his own God, and business, industry and governments the devil. Man must live not just with the benefits fo this world but with all the evils which curse and warp the lives of countless millions here and abroad. The problems are many and complex, and the apparent solutions often seem to produce even greater difficulties.

The Lutheran branch of the evangelical tradition[27] may now stand at a strategic point in a twentieth century which is itself in transition. The church's function may not so much be one of proposing solutions for all of the social, racial, economic, and political ills that beset our world, as it is one of addressing the more fundamental issues which lie behind the dilemmas of contemporary thought and life, and of challenging secular society and modern man at the critical level of the conscience.[28]

The challenges facing Protestantism, whether with respect to itself or in relation to the world around it, are staggering. To take up those challenges ought to be sufficiently exciting to occupy fully the life of any Christian and of the church, in order to give God the glory, to speak for and on behalf of Jesus Christ, and also to serve mankind.

FOOTNOTES

1. The best biography of Martin Luther in English is the work by Roland Bainton, *Here I Stand*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1950).

2. In my judgement, the best modern language study of the theology of Martin Luther is Philip Watson, *Let God be God*, (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1950). Another work often used is that of Paul Althaus, *Die Theologie Martin Luthers*, (Berlin: Guetersloh, 1962), English tr. by R. Schultz, *Theology of Martin Luther*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966). A significant older volume is that of Karl Holl, *Gessammelte Augsaetze zur Kirchengeschichte, I Luther*, 6th ed. (Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1932). On the contemporary scene, the work by Gerhard Ebeling, *Lutherstudien*, Band I-II, (Tuebingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1971, 1977) is one of the best.

3. In addition to such comparative studies as R. E. Davies, *Problem of Authority in the Continental Reformers: A Study of Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin*, (London: Epworth Press, 1946), there are a variety of books on the individual reformers. For example, on Calvin, see Francois Wendel, *Calvin, Ursprung und Entwicklung seiner Theologie*, (Berlin: Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1968); Georgia Harkness, *John Calvin, the Man and his Ethics*, (New York: Abingdon, 1958). On Wesley, there is the work of Vivian Green, *John Wesley*, (London: 1964); on Zwingli, a volume entitled *Zwingli* by George Potter, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), and Jean Rilliet, *Zwingli, Third Man of the Reformation*, English tr. by H. Knight, (London: Lutterworth Press, 1964).

4. Primary sources are the works of the reformers themselves, though they must be used with due discrimination. Then, over and above economic and political histories of the Reformation period, church histories supply more than enough information on the state of affairs. See for example Albert Huma, *Renaissance to Reformation*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans's, 1951), T. Lindsay, *A History of the Reformation*, 2 vols., (Edinburgh: Scribners, 1925), and John MacKinnon, *Luther and the Reformation*, 4 vols., (London: Longman's Green, 1925 ff.).

5. Ordination was a sacrament. Since the clergy administered the rest of the sacraments, the sacrament of ordination in a practical sense was pre-eminent among sacraments.

6. The Reformation churches were to reduce the number of sacraments to two - baptism and eucharist.

7. Protestantism did not take over canon law from Roman Catholicism. Instead, the Reformation churches proceeded to develop systems of ethics.

8. The doctrine of supererogatory merit in principle can be traced back at least to the middle of the second century.

9. The indulgence issue was the flashpoint of the Reformation.

10. Luther himself later said: "For I have learned this also in my own experience — that after all my watching, my strivings, my fastings, my prayings, and other laborious exercises, by which, when a monk, I afflicted myself, that doubtfulness still remained in my mind, which left me to think thus: who knows whether these things be pleasing unto God?" From Coles's edition, *Select Works of Martin Luther*, cited in Watson, p. 31.

11. In this connection, it should be noted that Luther later expressed his deep appreciation for the patience and understanding of vicar General Staupitz.

12. This too was due to Staupitz.

13. In the Tischreden which were recorded by Luther's students, Luther is reported to have said: "I was long in error under the Papacy . . . until at last I came upon the saying in Romas 1:17: "The righteousness Paul speaks, where there stood in the text Iustitia, righteousness . . . but when I found the distinction, that the Law was one thing, the Gospel another, then I broke through." Watson, *Let God be God*, p. 31, footnote 56.

14. So far as I am aware, Andres Nygren is the scholar who recovered Luther's understanding of theology of the cross as opposed to a theology of glory in our own century.

15. Luther is charged with pride by some Catholic scholars, even in the twentieth century, especially for his stubborn refusal to bow to the authority of the church.

16. The Lutheran confessions make the point repeatedly.

17. Later movements in Lutheranism and in Protestantism tended to move away from this Christ centred position to one that is labelled "fundamentalist."

18. New translations in German are gaining in popularity, but it is still too soon to say that the age of Luther's Bible has passed.

19. Watson, *Let God be God*, p. 179, ftn. 30 in answer to claims made by R. E. Davies in *Problems of Authority*.

20. Watson, *Let God be God*, p. 63.

21. The Lutheran churches in North America all accept the confessions of the Book of Concord. The best English edition is that of Theodore Tappert, *Book of Concord*, (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959). A good German/Latin edition is that of Johann Mueller (Guetersloh: G. Bertelsmann). The Helvetic and other confessional documents of Protestant churches are also available in various editions.

22. Another Danish Lutheran denomination represented in Canada by only one congregation. There are also congregations of Finnish pietism, of the Baltic nations, as well as a few congregations representing one or the other of the Lutheran state churches of Europe.

23. Walter Freitag, "Lutheran Tradition in Canada," in *The Churches and the Canadian Experience*, ed. J. W. Grant, (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1963). See also Norman Threinen, *Unity and Disunity: Some Non-Theological Factors*, (Winnipeg: 1973).

24. Walter Freitag, *Prospect and promise of Lutheran Unity in Canada*, (Calgary: Foothills Lutheran Press, 1974).

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid. As applied to a specific case, see Walter Freitag, *The Ordination of Women: Challenge for Canadian Lutheran Unity*, (Saskatoon: Zip Instant Printing, 1978).

27. It is necessary to emphasize the point that the mainline churches of Protestantism are evangelical and that that is not the sole prerogative of the fundamentalist communities.

28. It is unfortunate that Ernst Troeltsch in his work *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, 2 vols., (London: G. Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1931) so radically misinterpreted Luther. The fact is that North American Lutheranism has not really come to terms with Luther's understanding of the conscience in relation both to faith and to ethics, whether personal or corporate. It is a pity that such a work as that of Emmanual Hirsch, *Lutherstudien*, (Guetersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1954), is not yet available in English.

SUSHIL KALIA

A DEVOTEE'S REFLECTION ON THE HINDU TRADITION

"Hinduism" means both the religion and way of life of the Hindus. Hindu belief is complex, expressing religious, philosophical, and ethical notions in social, political, and economic institutions and practices. It is traced to and rooted in the Vedas, therefore is known as Vedic dharma. It is eternal, flowing from time immemorial, therefore is known as the everlasting Sanatana Dharma.

Dharma refers to religion, duty, justice, right code of conduct, property, essence, and so forth. Thus Hindu dharma includes religious, social, ethical, and spiritual ideas, traditions, and institutions. Dharma is a continuously evolving and at the same time quite stable entity.

It is not single teacher or scripture as common authority. The four Vedas, the two epics, the 108 Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the 18 Puranas, the Dharma Shastras, and most significant, the innumerable commentaries on these — all are deemed as authoritative and are interpreted to suit the changing conditions of life.

Though the beginning of Hindu dharma cannot be traced to any single place, date, or teacher, it was Shankara who laid the foundations of modern Hindu dharma, around A.D. 800. He re-established the supremacy of Vedanta, the *varna-ashrama* system, the institution of *matha* (monastaries), the mode of worship, the six principal deities, the system of daily rituals, intense devotion to God, and so forth. He was a great exponent of the *advaita* (non-dualistic) school of thought, which stressed the oneness of the creator and creation.

The most common injunction for every Hindu is to practice Samanya Dharma, a common code of ethics calling for adherence to truth, non-violence, contentment, forgiveness, restraint, abstention from misappropriation, purity, control of senses, wisdom, and learning.

The main tenets of Hindu dharma are belief in one Supreme Principle — Brahman; acceptance of the authority of the Vedas; the theory of karma and rebirth; values designates as *purusharta*, or the goal of life; the social organization of caste (*varna*); performance of rituals; and practice of Samanya Dharma. It is essential to note that one can remain a Hindu even when he rejects any or all of these.

Hinduism is not a religion or dogma, but a comprehensive and cooperative way of life. From time immemorial it has brought forward a grand procession of God-men and God-women to cleanse, purify, and revitalize this way of life. The kernel of Hindu dharma — the secret of its astonishing vitality, and the storehouse of its inexhaustible recuperative powers — is its tolerant, nondogmatic, nonconformist, and all-pervasive outlook, which gives it catholicity in space and time. It holds that all living things are enfranchised in God's commonwealth and that his sentinels are found throughout history in virtually all cultures. This was admirably illustrated when Pope Paul VI received a tumultuous welcome in Bombay in 1964. Eighty percent of the vast throngs that welcomed him were Hindus. They looked upon the Roman Catholic pontiff not as a leader of another faith, but as one who stood for ethical and spiritual values, a man of God.

Hindu teaching has proven powers of assimilation, taking into itself the noble thought expressed in other quarters. The Vedas declare, "Let noble thought come from every side" (Rig Veda 1.89.1). It is this sensibility that has been at work in the tradition's responsiveness to each new epoch. This also accounts for the Hindu refusal to participate in acts of proselytism.

Fundamental Ideas of Hinduism

God:

The Supreme Being is all-pervading, all-knowing and all-powerful. God is formless, nameless, and attributeless, yet has all forms, all names and all attributes. Brahman is beyond all description but can be praised in all possible works. It is the model for every form, and it manifests in all places at all times. It can be approached through knowledge, deeds, and devotion. Of these, the way of devotion is the simplest and yet most difficult. All these are integrated harmoniously in worship, prayer, meditation, charity, pilgrimage, and ritual.

Man:

Eating, sleeping, fearing, and copulating are common to animals and men. What is distinct in man is dharma, without which he is just an animal.

Life:

This world is the most beloved of all. There is no waiting for a future world; we must be happy here and now. Make us enjoyers of wide room and happiness:

> May we for a hundred autumns see the sun rise before us;
> May we live for a hundred autumns;
> May we hear for a hundred autumns;
> May we speak well for a hundred autumns;

May we hold our heads high for a hundred autumns;
Yea, even beyond a hundred autumns.

(Yajur Veda)

Death:

"On Death, I laugh at you," (Upanishads).

Sects:

There are innumerable sects based on *mata* (opinion), *marga* (way), *pantha* (path), *sampradaya* (tradition), and on the saints, thinkers, and scholars who flourished from time to time. Sects differ only in inessential details regarding the methods of performing rites, rituals, and worship. Hindus can be grouped according to their chosen deity, but everyone worships every God at some time or in some manner. Schools of philosophy are not counted as religious sects. All Hindus have certain common beliefs, traditions, practices, and worships.

Philosophical and spiritual background

Rita and Brahman: The Godhead

Rita of the Vedic seers, and Brahman of the Vedanta, are each the all-pervading, all-inclusive, and all-controlling Universal Principle. All forces of nature, and all gods and goddesses are aspects or forms of rita or Brahman. It is truth, it is dharma, it is all.

Hindu thinkers see evidence everywhere of the Eternal Law: the stars, planets, rivers, wind, rain, plants, birds, beasts, man — everything lives and moves only in obedience to the Eternal Law. Natural law and moral law are only its manifestations. The Eternal Law is reality. The Supreme Being, the Brahman, reveals itself through the rita, the commandments of which make it mighty.

The Supreme Being is all-pervading: all powers, qualities, and deities are only its aspects or manifestations. The *devas* (shining ones) are mere concrete representations of its attributes: glory, splendor, power, intelligence, valor, light, life.

All deities are thus mere forms of one Divine Spirit, which the Vedic seers identify with the *atman* (soul) of man. They declare, "Brahman is consciousness, this soul is Brahman; the universe is Brahman, I am Brahman." These statements strongly emphasize the divinity and immortality of the human spirit. They place before mortals the grand ideal of becoming one with the vast universal entity: to know Brahman is to become Brahman.

The late Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, philosopher and former president of India, says: "The ultimate reality sleeps in the stone, breathes in the plant, feels in the animal, and awakens to self-consciousness in the man. The absolute thus is our organized whole, with interrelated parts in it."[1]

In the words of Swami Vivikenanda: "Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divine in Him, by controlling nature, external and internal."[2] Do this by work, worship, psychic control, or philosophy — by one or more or all of these — and be free.

This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, rituals, books, and temples are but secondary details. As Swami Vivekananda observes: "Religion is not in books, nor in theories, nor in dogmas, nor in talking, not even in reasoning. It is being and becoming — man must realize God, feel God, talk to God. That is religion. There is such a thing as realization even in this life, and it is open to everyone, and religion begins with the opening of this faculty, if I may call it so."[3]

The life of the seeker after truth must be dynamic and creative, not standardized in every respect. Freedom being the first condition of growth, the speaker must be able to follow freely the laws of his being. According to temperment and capacity, he may pursue the life of selfless activity, the path of devotion, the way of sense control and mental concentration, or the path of self-analysis and self-knowledge, singly or jointly.

Lord Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita, "Whatever may be the form which each devotee seeks to worship with faith, in that form alone, I make his faith steadfast.

Hindu worship (*upasana*)

Hinduism insists on our working steadily upwards and improving our knowledge of God. The worshippers of the Absolute are the highest in rank. Second to them are the worshippers of the personal God. Then come the worshippers of incarnations like Sri Rama and Sri Krishna. Below them are those who worship ancestors, deities, and sages. Lowest of all are the worshippers of petty forces and spirits. The man of action finds his God in fire, the man of meditation in the idol, but the strong in spirit find God everywhere. The seers see the Supreme in the self.

God is one; gods are differently named ideas of One Being. This is seen in the Rig Veda: "The One Being, the Sages contemplate in many ways," and, "The One Being, the wise do call by many names."

The nine aspects of devotion (adoration of the Divine)

Time is precious, very little is available for the quest of the Divine, which is the true purpose of man's life. We must make the utmost use of our days and cannot afford to let any time pass in other activities. We should gather ourselves in adoration of the Divine. This adoration is ninefold.[4] The initial step for many is simply listening to the stories of the manifestation of the Divine, through which hearing itself is purified. Worship through the offering of flowers, water, honey, and so on, to the form of the Deity is another of the adorations. This schema culminates in what is called the "crown of devotion", the surrender of self to the Divine, an act in which all personal will and desire is exhausted.

Ritual worship

According to our understanding, the ultimate object of ritualistic worship is the realization of God. It is to be achieved by the gradual transformation of the worshipper into the likeness of the worshipped deity. The manuals of rituals prescribe certain ceremonies which symbolize the deities or represent their dwelling places as perceived in the occult visions of their seers.

Images are of three kinds: images which represent a deity in human form with limbs and the like; emblems which stand for particular deities; and diagrams or geometrical figures consisting of lines, curves, squares, and triangles, all of which are symbolic, called *yantras* or *mandalas*. They are the figures, symbols, or representations of the divinity which the worshipper places before him for adoration and worship.

The image or diagram does not by itself become an object of worship. It remains but a material form until it is infused with the life principle. The worshipper contemplates in his inner being the form of the deity as induced by the physical form before him. He dwells upon it with intense concentration and devotion. A spiritual force is generated, and he transmits the power released in his consciousness to the object, which then becomes alive with the spiritual energy. This is called *prana pratishtha* (installation of life force), a unique contribution of *tantra* to the Indian spiritual heritage.

Upacharas (honors services)

In these services, worship is offered to a living form of the deity. Traditionally this worship is composed of sixteen forms of service. It begins with the seating of the image of the deity, just as a chair would be offered to a guest. A ritual welcome is followed by washing the feet of the deity. Bathing and clothing is followed by offerings of sandal-paste perfume, flowers, incense, light, and food to the god. The final service, that of a prayer of adoration, concludes the worship.

Each part of one's self joins in the act of consecration and worship of the Divine, and thus the whole being of man is carried in the surge of devotion and surrender. The deity and the devotee are identified as united by these ritual acts. Details vary from place to place and from tradition to tradition.

Worship in the temples includes, among other things, an elaborate recitation of prayers, along with music and dance. Food is offered to God and is distributed among the devotees. Thus the whole event is a combination of music, color, and fragrance, intended to sublimate the senses.

Deities may be mentioned as well. Apart from Lord Ganapati Shiva, Sakti, and Vishnu, Hindus worship a number of other deities. Agni (fire), one of the prominent deities of the Vedas, still has a very important position in the religious life of the Hindus. Agni is kindled and worshipped in all important rituals and domestic sacrifices. Fire, in the form of waving lights, is an inseparable part of all modes of worship. There are families in the different parts of India who have the tradition of *agnihotra*, the fire kept alive eternally. The tradition involves keeping a continually burning light in the temples and at home. During my journey to southern India in January, 1976, I witnessed one such flame, kept for more than 75 years in one household, still being worshipped by the family members. Light is the symbol of knowledge, success, and auspiciousness.

Vows, fasts, festivals and rites

Devotees take some vows of fasting, and they offer special worship, a pilgrimage, a gift, and the like to propitiate their family or chosen deity. The worship is celebrated by people at home or in public, and a large number of relatives, friends, and devotees usually are invited. Hindus are advised to fast on the eleventh day of each fortnight. Some observe the fast on any day of the week, to please their chosen deity. A fast is either complete or partial, according to such considerations as one's age, state of health, or pressure of work.

Popular festivals include the birthdays of various saints and divine incarnations, in season homages to sages and teachers, celebration of light, familial bonds, and a host of others.

A common feature of the festivals is that people clean and white-wash their homes, wear ceremonial clothes, and exchange greetings, sweets and gifts. The main purpose of festivals is to promote social harmony. There are some rites to be performed for domestic and public welfare, in a temple or in a specially organized meeting.

For the Hindu tradition the goal of human life is to realize the Divine. The paths of knowledge, action, meditation, and devotion are ways of achieving this oneness.

OM From the unreal lead me to the Real.
From darkness lead me to Light.
From death lead me to immortality.

(Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1, 3, 28.)

FOOTNOTES

1. Chidambara Kulkarni, *Hindu Dharma*, (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhauan, 1971), pp. 13 - 14.

2. Swami Yatiswarananda, *The Divine Life*, (Mylapore, Madras: Sri Rama Krishna Math, 1963), p. 28.

3. Ibid., p. 17.

4. For an elaboration see M. P. Pandit, *Adoration of the Divine Mother*, (Madras: Ganesh & Company, 1973), pp. 1 - 10.

MAC NISHIYAMA

JODO SHINSHU BUDDHISM: A DEVOTEE'S REFLECTION

I should really just hold a noble silence, like the Buddha, and say, "That's it." Maybe you'd be much happier. Or I should just say, "As a Shinshu follower, I don't know; ask the Buddha."

Sakyamuni Buddha reportedly once said that human beings are defined as existing with many fears. He specified five: the fear involved in making a decent living; fear of ill-repute; fear of addressing an assembly — especially of men of position and knowledge; fear of death; and fear of falling into evil paths. I think he was thinking of me especially when he specified fear of addressing an assembly; I am sure there are knowledgeable people here.

Are you students of religion, or are you like me, an ordinary person just going down the street, but searching for something? I think we're searching and might want to do a little comparing. I really don't know what I'm looking for yet; I guess I'm looking for peace with myself and with the world. I don't know if that is ever going to come, and I don't know how I'm going to achieve it. If you are scholars of religion, you may get a lot of comparative discussion; if you are like me, you don't get too much, but your curiousity is working on you. It's been many years since I started studying and comparing and to this day I don't know whether I'm any further ahead for it. I don't think so, but I'm glad we're here. I think we have something in common: we're searching for a better life on this earth; some of you might say for a better life hereafter. I haven't got that far yet: if I could have a good life here, I think I would be satisfied and my hereafter would be looked after.

Early experiences

Let me take you back to how I got started in Jodo Shinshu. It goes back to when I was a child on the coast, in New Westminster, B.C. I must be honest: religion didn't make sense to me then, and it doesn't make sense to me now. I wouldn't say my father was religious, but he put in his time for the church, and he and my mother wanted me to go to church. But I couldn't waste my time on that; I had friends, and Sunday was a good day to play. So the only time I went was for three main services in our Jodo Shinshu faith. They would chant *sutras* (scriptures) which didn't make sense to me then and don't now. It ended up being mostly a social event to me, but I guess even in those social events you can't help but grasp something.

Then the war came along. Maybe some of you are familiar with the events affecting Japanese Canadians. We were uprooted from our homes; all males 16 years old and over were sent off to camps. I was only 14 at that time. In the little village where we stayed there were about four of us under 16, and there were about ten families. We had to take responsibility for things that the men normally look after. Then those of us left — girls, mothers, and some of the boys — were moved to a relocation camp at Hastings Park. We were given only a few hours notice. I remember when the Greyhound bus came I was still pushing out an electric stove which we had just bought a couple of months before. I was getting it ready for the B.C. security commission to look after, along with our other household goods, until after the war. I remember then — I haven't even told my wife this, because it didn't really mean too much to me until about a week ago — that as the bus waited and I pushed that stove out with help from a couple of the boys, my mother had her hands together, palm to palm before her, in *gassho*. She was reciting the *nembutsu*. I let it pass by and didn't think about it. But as I think of it now, I wonder whether it was a gesture of despair, or whether it was in gratitude, as it should be. I'll never know, as she has passed away, but I hope it wasn't in despair. Certainly her situation was bleak: dad and the oldest son were gone; there she was with the kids, and we didn't know where we were going. Where could she turn to now? I really wonder now how she meant it.

Acceptance

I tell you this because I now look back on the whole evacuation and wonder if religious teaching had something to do with the Japanese Canadians' being passive. I'm not saying all Japanese people were Buddhist: there were also Christians of various denominations there. But whatever the mix, the majority were passsive. Today if somebody said they were going to uproot you within 24 hours, there would be an uproar. In the United States, the black people and ethnic groups now will make demands; at that time there were hardly any demands made by the Japanese Canadians. Some protested when they were taken off to internment camps, but the majority were very passive, and I wonder if it is the Japanese culture or the Buddhist heritage that makes us accept such things?

I read books where it says you should accept things as they are, and if you can do something about them, do so, but if you cannot, accept them. I think that's great, because if you can't accept something, you are going to be miserable. I was telling the kids this in Sunday school last week. On Friday night it started to snow in Raymond, and I got a little miserable. I thought: "Here it is snowing, and this weekend I have to clean out the

attic. I'll have to take my boots and jacket off every time I come back in. In and out. Take them off when I come in, put them on when I go out." Then I thought that if I were a skier I would be delighted. So I should accept it and say: "it's snowing, I can't do anything about it. I'll forget the attic and go skiing." I would be much happier, wouldn't I? The only trouble is, I'm not a skier.

I guess I'm getting older, because I stop to think about these things now. Twenty years ago I would have cussed and said: "Why does it have to snow, today of all days? Why couldn't it wait until Monday?" I'm starting to mellow a bit. Maybe old age is doing it, maybe religion has nothing to do with it. I couldn't tell you, but as we go along I think about these things.

Spreading the faith

I'm a Japanese Canadian, and the majority in the Jodo Shinshu faith in Canada and the United States are of Japanese ancestry. It is because we are followers of Shinran, who was born in Japan. His teachings were brought to the British Columbia coast approximately 75 years ago. It may be because we are Jodo Shinshu, or because of our Japanese ancestry, but we are not very pushy. We don't go out and say: "Hey, we've got a great thing going here. Why don't you join us? Why don't you learn this?"

I wonder why we don't, particularly because I live in a Mormon community, and they do a tremendous job. At our Sunday school some of our kids asked why we don't have missionaries. I asked if they would go, and they said no. "Would you believe that we have missionaries?" I asked, and the said, "No, we haven't got any." When I said we do have missionaries, they practically said I was crazy. They asked: "Who goes around knocking on doors? Who will take two years out of their lives and go to another country and preach their religion? None of our kids are doing that." I said that I thought they were wrong, because in our faith each one is a missionary. I told them that they, by their action every day, are doing missionary work.

I find this to be very true in our community, which has only 2,700 residents. I have had teachers from the public high schools come and ask me what we teach our children in Sunday school. I ask them why, and they say our children are different: they are well-mannered, they are disciplined, and they listen. I was quite surprised, because my kids attended there and they didn't seem well-disciplined and well-mannered. Now, each year that character dwindles; they are getting further away from it. Maybe they're getting more Westernized. I'm not saying that former heritage was solely the religion or solely Japanese. I can't. I would really like to say it is what we are teaching, but I think it is that there is an interdepenency, there is something from both. I do believe that we have something that is very beautiful. I can say it is beautiful, but I don't understand it. Isn't that amazing?

Faith

As I go through life I can't help but think that I can't understand all these things the Buddha has taught. However, Shinran has come along and said, "It is very simple: have sincere faith in Amida and his primal vow." And ministers, especially those who first came over from Japan, have told us that maintaining the eighteenth vow and the forty-eighth vow practically guarantees your salvation.

Yet even the simplicity of it seems to make it complex for me, I guess because I am still searching. I can't look at myself, deep down, and say I am helpless, I am powerless, I cannot obtain my own salvation, I cannot gain merit to enlighten myself. I cannot do that; I still try to do something I doubt, because I still can't fully accept what has been taught to me. But I have to go on and try to believe as much as I can of Shinran's interpretation and experience of the Buddhist teachings. I will try to accept as much as I can; I will try to live every day in gratitude for all things and for the interdependency and oneness of all life. I don't know if I'll do it in this life, but I hope somewhere I shall gain some insight of a better life.

Jodo Shinshu has been in Canada roughly 75 years, and in that span of time it has been propagated mostly by what we call Issa Japanese — the first generation of ministers from Japan. Until a few years ago sermons were mostly in Japanese. There were few available books about Buddhism, and they were written on general Buddhism or Hinayana Buddhism. You had to ascertain what you were reading; without a little background knowledge it is difficult to understand just what kind of Buddhism you are following. In the last 15 to 20 years, books on Jodo Shinshu have become easier to acquire. By reading books you can get an idea of how Jodo Shinshu affects your faith and what it's beliefs are. At the same time I think it is quite necessary for a minister to try to break down some of these teachings to common language in order to understand some of the finer points. In the last 20 years we have been getting English-speaking ministers who tell us about Buddhist teaching.

It has been quite a struggle, especially when you live in a Christian society where you are bombarded every day by messages from radio, TV, or books. There are many, many Christian concepts that creep into your daily life. As Buddhists we must accept the society we live in, so we accept these Christian concepts and rituals. The greatest difficulty comes for younger people trying to differentiate some of these rituals and celebrations. Take Christmas for instance: as Jodo Shinshu Buddhists, we don't tell our children that they can't celebrate Christmas. In this Christian society we have to accept this as a religious holiday and celebration. In Sunday school just prior to Christmas I explain to the children that it is the birthday of a great teacher, and we respect great teachers, so

we will celebrate the birth of Christ along with our Christian friends. At the same time, Christmas has become pretty commercialized. I think its more the commercial spirit than the Christian spirit that we're being motivated by. I try to explain to the children that as Buddhists we can give gifts and accept gifts, but we should do so in the spirit of charity. In our Buddhist tradition its called *dana*, and the giver must have the spirit of wanting to give, while the receiver must receive the gift graciously. Then the true spirit is complete. I think this is so in the original idea of gift-giving at Christmas time. It wasn't so much how costly a gift you were going to give. The spirit of giving was taken away by commercialized Christmas, and we try to tell the children to give not just a material thing, rather, you should give yourself, you should give such things as helping and kind words throughout the year. These are much more real gifts than waiting until Christmas to give something, in hopes of getting something back. This is the kind of thing we run up against in our Buddhist movement here — we have to cope with both Buddhist and Christian ideals.

Another point I'd like to bring up has meant quite a bit to me. When I was sworn onto our town council, the usual manner was to be sworn with your hand on the Bible. Being a Buddhist, this presented a dilemma. I made up my mind years ago that if I were called to swear on the Bible, I would explain that I would do so, but as a Buddhist, I would rather swear on our Buddhist text, which would be more meaningful to me. Swearing on the Bible — though I respect the Bible — would just be going through a ritual. When I was sworn onto council, I requested of the mayor that I use the Buddhist text, because it would be much more meaningful to me. All council agreed, and that is the route I took. I hope young Buddhists will think about these things and not just accept things without thought.

Though we live in a predominantly Christian society, there is still room for our beliefs. As Jodo Shinshu Buddhists, we should accept the society we live in, but not let that acceptance obliterate the special insights and qualities of our faith and of our cultural heritage.

MANSA C. SINGH

SPIRITUAL PATH OF SIKH RELIGION AS EMBODIED IN SRI GURU SAHIB

When by the grace of God, a Saint *Sat Guru* manifests Himself in the world, He carries out the task of contacting the embodied souls to the oversoul and carries them across the ocean of material world to the eternal home. Sat Guru (in whom *naam*, Word, the power of God is manifest) carries out this task variously. In Indian tradition, a gathering of a Saint and His devotees is called a *Sat Sang* (a gathering of seekers after truth; holy congregation). In a Sat Sang, a saint expounds the outer and inner aspects of the spiritual life of man. In this, usually the writing of the previous saints as well as his own are read out and their inner meaning and import clearly given by the Master in practical terms.

In Sikh tradition, starting from the first Master, Sri Guru Nanak Dev, 1469-1539, brought together the writings of the first four Gurus, his own and those of other saints from different parts of India. Guru Gobind Singh added to it the utterances of the ninth Master, Guru Tegh Bahader. This compilation came to be known as Adi Granth, and is reverentially called Sri *Guru Granth Sahib*.

The form of expression in Guru Granth Sahib is poetic and is set to Ragas, Indian musical scales. The Subject dealt with is the knowledge of mind, soul, Oversoul and God. How man can overcome his limitations to have the knowledge of God, who can help him on the way, what is path, vehical, progress, goal and achievement on the way? All is uttered by those who had the experience of the reality and then helped others on the path to achieve the same goal.

In Sri Guru Granth Sahib the fundamental problem of religion is verbalized in a personal way by Saint Ravi Dass, the cobbler saint of India who lived in the 15th century in Varanasi,

> How to reach the other shore,
> Nobody makes me understand it.
> By which this coming and going ceases.

It is the problem of knowledge of this higher reality; state and structure of man, nature of God, the relation between man and God in latent form and its realization in full manifestation, that is abundantly dealt with in Sri Guru Granth Sahib. It is from this source, that the solution to this problem will be briefly presented.

First of all the nature of ultimate reality, the fountain head of all relative realities is given by Guru Nanak in the fundamental statement at the very outset of the Holy Book. It reads

> There is One Reality, the Unmanifest-Manifested
> Ever-Existent, He is Naam (Conscious Spirit),
> The Creator; pervading all;
> Without fear; without enmity;
> The Timeless; the Unborn and the Self-existent
> Complete within Itself.
> Through the favour of His true Servant, the Guru,
> He may be realized.
> He was when there was nothing
> He was before all ages began;
> He existeth now, O Nanak,
> And shall exist forevermore.
>
> (Jap Ji, prologue, page 1)

Immediately, then Guru Nanak takes up the question of how one can be in harmony with this reality. In this, first of all, he indicates the approaches which do not lead to the goal, and then a fundamental statement is made about the foundation of the path.

> One cannot comprehend Him through reason, even if one
> reasoned for ages;
> One cannot achieve inner peace by outward silence, not though

one sat dumb for ages;
One cannot buy contentment with all the riches of the world,
nor reach Him with all mental ingenuity.
How may one know the Truth and break through the cloud of falsehood?
There is a Way, O Nanak, to make His Will our own,
His Will which is already wrought in our existence.

(Jap Ji, stanza 1, page 1)

Naam, conscious spirit of God's power in action is His will. It permeates and sustains all creation. Guru Nanak, in the second stanza of *Jap Ji* gives a glimpse of the working of His will in all creation.

All things are manifestations of His Will;
But His Will is beyond description.
By His Will is matter quickened into life;
By His Will is greatness obtained;
By His Will some are born high and others low.
By His Will are some men's joys and sorrows ordained;
By His Will (the pious) obtained Salvation
By His Will (the impious) wander in endless transmigration.
All exist under His Will,
And nothing stands outside.
One attuned with His Will, O Nanak, is wholly freed from ego.

(Jap Ji, stanza 2, page 1)

Guru Nanak in the above utterances has shown that Naam is a link between God Absolute, Unmanifest, on one hand, and the manifested reality on the other. Naam is at the back of all creation, and the Way to God. Knowledge is to be in harmony with it. Those who are attuned to It become wholly free from the bondage of ego. Ego, basis of individual identity, is also the cause of our separation from the Ultimate reality.

Human birth is the result of our *Karmas*, actions of our past lives, but salvation comes only from His grace. Now, Guru Nanak takes up the problem as to what action this human vessel can engage to make itself worthy of that grace. To be in communion with the Divine Word and meditation on His glory, is given as the answer.

True is the lord, True His Holy Word;
His love has been described as infinite.
Men pray to Him for gifts, which He grants untiringly.
When all is His;
What can we offer at His feet?
What can we say to win His love?
At the ambrosial hour of the early dawn,
Be you in communion with the Divine Word
and meditate on His Glory.
Our Birth is the fruit of our actions;
But Salvation comes only from His Grace.
O Nanak, know the True One as immanent in all.

(Jap Ji, stanza 4, page 2)

Manifestation of the Word is more explicitly given by Guru Nanak as unstruck music and all pervading holy light. Every soul is illuminated by this divine light which can be manifested within only by a Sat Guru.

The firmament is Thy salver,
The sun and the moon Thy lamps;
The galaxy of stars are as pearls scattered,
The woods of sandal are Thine Incense.
The breezes blow Thy royal fan;
The flowers of the forests,
Lie as offerings at Thy feet.
What wonderful Worship with lamps is this
O Thou destroyer of fear! Unstruck Music is the sound of Thy temple drums.
Thousands are Thine eyes,

And yet Thou has no eyes;
Thousands are Thy shapes,
And yet Thou hast no shape;
Thousands are Thy pure feet,
And yet Thou hast not one foot;
Thousands are Thy noses,
And yet Thou hast no nose.

All this Thy play and bewitches me.
In every heart there is light:
That light art Thou.
By the Light that is of God Himself
Is every soul illumed:
But this divine Light becomes manifest
Only by the Guru's teachings.
What is pleasing to Thee, O Lord
Is the best arti: worship with the lamps.

O Lord, my mind yearns for Thy lotus feet,
As the Honey-bee for the nectar of the flowers.
Night and day Lord, I am athirst for Thee
Give water of Thy mercy to Nanak:
He is like the sarang: The Hawk-cuckoo that drinks only rain drops
So that he may dwell ever in the peace of Thy Name.

(Rag Dhanasri, M1, page 13)

Man is spark of divine light, its recognition leads to understanding one's own true nature and this to the knowledge of God. Guru Amar Das, the third master, spoke in this regard:

Mind, thou art a Spark of Divine Light, so grasp the True Source of thy being.
The Lord is ever with thee; through the Guru's teachings rejoice in His Presence.
By grasping thine own true nature, thou graspest God's
And the meaning of birth and death.
When through the Guru's grace thou hast grasped the Supreme One
Thou shalt lose the illusion of otherness.
Thou shalt abide in peace, honoured, and acceptable.
Nanak saith: O my mind, thou art an image of God,
Grasp the True Source of thy being.

(Rag Asa, M.3, page 441)

About the manifestation of holy sound within, Guru Amar Das spoke in succinct terms.

Celestial five sounded Music is heard in the blessed house,
The heart, where God indwelleth;
In that happy house,
In which God hath put forth His strength;
Heavenly Music is heard.
Therein the Lord has subdued the five evil passions,
And destroyed the fear of death.
Saith Nanak: They obtain happiness
And in their hearts the heavenly Music is heard.

(Rag Ramkali, M.3, page 917)

Inner contact with the holy light and holy sound can be had only with the grace of a Sat Guru. No human effort can lead to that experience. Once the gift of Naam is obtained from a Sat Guru, one has to learn to die to the world and live in the Word.

He who dies in the Word
Attains to success.
Without the Word
None can be saved.
Man lives like a hypocrite.

O Nanak, without the Guru
The Name cannot be known,
The Word's spirit cannot be known
However a man may crave for it.

(Slok 32, M.3, page 1416)

A Sat Guru is the embodiment of Naam, Word made flesh. In His compassion He gives the gift of Naam to hungry souls. Guru Ram Das, the fourth Master praises a Sat Guru thus:

Hail, all hail, to the True Guru, the Perfect,
Who hath grasped the Highest Truth!
On encountering the Guru, every thirst is slaked.
Body and mind are freshened.
Hail, all hail, to the Guru, to Truth Incarnate,
In whose just eyes all are alike
Hail, all hail, to the True Guru, free from enmity,
Above the need of praise or the fear of calumny.
Hail, all hail, to the True Guru, the Wise,
Who hath God's Light within him.
Hail, all hail, to the True Guru, the Eternal,
Whose goal is beyond our grasping.
Hail, all hail, to the True Guru, the True,
Who confirmeth men in the Truth.
Hail, all hail, to the True Guru, saith Nanak.
It is he who imparteth the Word.

(Gauri Sukhmani, M.5, Astapadi, 1, Pauri, 2, page 262)

Guru Nanak gives the importance of remembrance of God, but at the same time emphasizes that salvation comes only through His grace. Man can make no claim for the success of his own efforts.

Let one tongue grow into a hundred thousand, nay even twenty times more,
And each of them endlessly chant His holy name.
In this way lie the steps that lead Godwards, by ascending which one becomes on with Him.
On hearing of the Heavens, even worms aspire to reach them,
Not knowing that salvation comes only through His Grace,
And those who say otherwise, are vain babblers and liars.

(Jap Ji, stanza 32, page 7)

The importance of good moral conduct and on the spiritual path, is pictorially presented by Guru Nanak in the following hymn:

These are the secrets of true husbandry,

The body is the field; let the mind be the ploughman,
good deeds thy ploughing,
Let thine honest strivings be the runnels
That irrigate the field.
Sow the seed of the Holy Name.
Make the clouds of the field level with contentment;
Wear, as a farmer, the peasant garb of humility.
Then with the grace of God, His love will blossom.
Blessed is the peasant who farms in this wise.
And Thou, great man, thy worldly goods will not go with thee;
Maya, the veil of illusion hath misled the world
And few indeed know this to be so.

(Rag Sorath, M.1, page 595)

Sat Sang, the company of holy saints, is of great virtue for a devotee on the path. It is a Saint Sat Guru who unites him with Holy Naam, places him on the path of Simiran, assists him in the remembrance of God and helps him on the inner spiritual journey. Guru Ram Das says,

With lust and with anger,
The city, that is thy body
is full to the brim.
Meet a saint and destroy
That lust and anger.
By God's decree
I have found my Guru
And my soul is absorbed
In the love of My Lord.
Bow humbly to the saint
That is a pious act.
Bow to the Ground before him
That is devotion, indeed.
The faithless know not,
The joy of the love of the Lord;
In their hearts
Is the thorn of self-love,
And each step they take,
It pierces deeper and deeper
And they feel pain and sorrow
Till they bring death on their heads.

The Lord's chosen are absorbed in the Lord's Naam.
The pain of birth and the fear of death are broken.
They have attained the Imperishable Lord;
Great honour is theirs in all regions.

I am poor and wretched,
But I am Thine, O Lord:
Save me, O save me
Thou greatest of the great.
Thy name, to Thy slave Nanak
Is as his staff and his shield.
Only in the Name of the Lord
I have found my comfort.

(Rag Gauri poorbi, M.4, page 13)

About the spiritual advantages accrued in the company of Saints Guru Arjan speaks directly as,

In the company of the saints
The mind hankereth not wildly;
In the company of the saints
The soul attaineth to happiness;
In the company of the saints
Man glimpseth the invisible;
In the company of the saints
He endureth the unendurable;
In the company of the saints
We reach the heights of the spirit;
In the company of the saints
We enter the Lord's Presence;
In the company of the saints
We acquire all the virtues;
In the company of the saints
We are aware only of God;
In the company of the saints
We are granted His Name, Life's treasure;
Nanak is ever a sacrifice
Unto the living saints.

(Gauri Sukhamani, M.5, Aslapadi, 7; Pauri 4, page 271)

The essentials of the path: utterance of the Holy Name, the company of Saints, meditation on Naam, singing the glory of God, and the life of purity, are stated with clarity by Guru Arjan.

Of all the lights in the courtyard
The best light is the light of God in the heart!
Of all the contemplations of the human mind
The best contemplation is the contemplation
Of the Lord's Holy Name;
Of all renunciation is the renunciation
Of lust, of anger, and of greed;

Of all prayers of the heart
The best prayer is the prayer
To the Guru to be given the Grace
Of properly praising the Lord;

And of all strenuous vigils
The best vigil is a vigil
Spent singing Divine Songs.

Of all man's attachments
The best attachment is the attachment
Of man's heart to the feet of the Lord.

Blessed is he, saith Nanak,
Who is taught such a path and walks on it.
If a man but maketh God his stronghold
All that he does is the best.

(Rag Maru, M.5, page 1018)

The path is inner; so is the progress. Signs of the inner progress of a devotee are revealed by Guru Arjan in the following hymn:

Everything is within oneself, nothing outside oneself,
He who seeketh the Lord outside Himself is lost in doubt;
He who by the Guru's grace hath attained to God within himself,
Is happy in himself, and in the world beyond him is happy.

Jhim, Jhim, the nectar falls like rain within him,
The mind drinketh it and hearkens to and contemplates the Word.
Day and night it rejoiceth
And it sporteth ever with God.
Separated from God through many deaths and births,
I have now met Him and I by the Guru's grace,
Though I was as the dry tree, am now green again.

Having encountered the Guru,
I have attained to wisdom
And I contemplate the Name
As waves blend with water,
So my light is blended with the Lord's Light.
Saith Nanak: The doors of delusion have been destroyed
No longer shall the soul wander or be separated from Thee.

(Rag Majh, M.5, page 102)

There is one Being, who is Creator and Uncaused Cause of all. He has created the whole universe through His ever active will, which is diffused throughout. His divine will is revealed unto man by communion with the holy Naam, the conscious entity working at the back of all creation. The Word is the true Teacher, for all mankind. The conscious spirit is awakened in a man by a true Master. Communion with holy Naam is helped by a life of Simran, remembrance of God by uttering the holy names.

The practice of Simran begins with the repetition of the Lord's objective names slowly with a mental poise. At first the process is objective, but in course of time becomes subjective. Then the constant thought of the Lord

continues without cessation. Simran, forms the basis of spiritual pursuit, it has to be continued till the goal is reached.

A true master or a true saint cannot be known all at once. He may be described as one who is brimming with spirituality far above the life of senses. He has the refulgent light of the infinite and is competent to relight out spiritual lamps. Whenever one happens with an open mind to be in the presence of a real master, a saint, one finds waves of solace and feels an uplifting urge. His words sink deep into the heart of listeners and never are without effect.

In Sri Guru Granth Sahib has presecribed a path for realizing the existence of Divinity in man and for seeing its presence everywhere. Sat Guru, who embodies this knowledge, gives the contact of Naam to the seeker. Internal spiritual advancement is then achieved by a life of remembrance of the holy names of God, meditation on Naam and leading a life of moral purity, prayer and the company of saints. It recognizes the equality of spiritual potentiality in all men and women, without caste, creed or ethnic origin. The message is universal and is equally applicable to all.

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RABBI SAUL Z. HYMAN

THE JEWISH TRADITION: A PERSONAL JOURNEY

The son of Canadian-born parents, I am to the best of my knowledge Saskatchewan's first Canadian-born rabbi. The year 1951 took me from the University of Saskatchewan to New York City. There I attended the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, achieving a master's degree in Hebrew literature and, in 1958, ordination as rabbi. My teachers included internationally known luminaries such as Saul Lieberman, Robert Gordis, H. L. Ginsburg, Mordecai Kaplan, and Abraham Joshua Heschel. In 1976 I accepted a call to serve the Beth Shalom congregation in Edmonton.

My spiritual journey actually began many years before my birth. Around 1888 my great grandparents, together with my grandmother, Rachel Miller, left their native Lithuania to make a new life for the family in the vast Dominion of Canada. They came with the hope and promise of being able to live in freedom and practice the ancestral faith without constant fear for life and limb. My grandfather, Israel Hyman, came from Romania. Soon after my grandparents' arrival, they were introduced and married in Cornwall, Ontario. It was there that my father was born, the oldest of seven children.

About the same time Rachel and Hirsh Steinberg came from Kraminetz, Russia. Mother was born in Winnipeg, on Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. An early minute-book shows my maternal grandfather as being a pioneer member of Winnipeg's Rosh Pina Synagogue, founded in the early 1800's.

With the expansion of the railroad into the West, there was a promise of a better life through homesteading in what was then the Northwest Territories. And so my father's parents found themselves in Wapella, Saskatchewan — the first successful Jewish farming colony in Canada.

I never knew my grandfather — though I carry his Hebrew name — but my *baba*, my grandmother, lived to be 91, passing away in 1961. She told stories of the early years in Wapella: being helped by the Indians to survive their first Western Canadian winter; giving birth alone in the wilderness while grandpa was carrying a back-pack, peddling to earn a few dollars to provide some extras for his growing family; pounding the floor of the sod hut with her bare feet and filling in chinks with mud.

Their religious life was little different from what it had been in Europe, for as Jews they could not separate life and religion. They continued to observe the Sabbath and to keep the holy days and dietary laws as they always had in the Old Country. Life was tough, but there was a good God above. They knew no other way of life and no other way of religious life than what they had been taught and what they lived.

The Hyman's came to Alberta for a short time and tried farming in Busby. They finally settled in the French-Catholic community of Gravelbourg, Saskatchewan. My oldest brother attended the Convent School in Gravelbourg for two years. From what I have heard, the family continued in its traditional observances. Securing meat slaughtered in the kosher fashion depended on a twice-a-week train from Regina — in the days before refrigeration as we know it. A great uncle who lived in Gravelbourg was certified for slaughtering poultry, which eased the burden somewhat. I once heard my father mention selecting wheat for flour for the purpose of baking their own *matzo* (unleavened bread) on the farm.

Dad and mother met in Winnipeg and were married in 1917. Mother was brought to Gravelbourg as a young bride, together with her mother, who had just been widowed. (Mother's family had lived in Edmonton sometime between 1912 and 1916). Regina became home in 1928, and I was born in 1930.

My two grandmothers had a decided effect on my life. Mother's mother was a pious, saintly lady, who took me to the Synagogue every Sabbath regardless of the weather. We were often the first to enter. Until she passed away when I was four years old, I spoke only Yiddish. Baba Hyman, who had been through the Wapella colony and Gravelbourg, remained all her life illiterate in English and Yiddish, though she was able to tell time and, in later life, dial the telephone. She was a gentle soul, a tiny lady who oozed love and concern for everyone.

I start with this background, because the home I grew up in reflected the basic values taught by the old family, though observance began to wane. I consider myself to have been raised by a nonobservant Jewish home in a nonobservant Orthodox Jewish community. In a sense, traditional values always were present in the home in which I was raised. Dietary laws were observed and candles were lit to usher in Sabbaths and festivals. These traditions and values had a decided effect on me personally and ultimately on my whole life. Beyond them however, my own spiritual journey was essentially a personal search.

It has been said that the third generation remembers what the second generation tried hard to forget. Thus Jewish parents who are assimilating and who are themselves children of immigrants may have children who return unexpectedly to *kashrut* (the Jewish dietary regimen) and other positive modes of Jewish observance. But the return often is complicated. In my own case, during my years at university I rebelled against my home — though not entirely — and returned to Judaism as a way of life, ultimately becoming a rabbi, a teacher of our tradition. Actually, I had rebelled earlier, for I attended Hebrew school until I was fifteen; most children stopped their studies

at thirteen. Even more unusual, I enjoyed my studies and my teachers, in particular the late Louis Gold, who in later years performed the rabbinic function for the Jewish community in Lethbridge.

So I began a tutorial program, with Rabbi Adler directing my sights toward the seminary in New York. After receiving my B.A. in Saskatchewan, I began an intensive preparatory program in New York and was admitted a year later into the graduate rabbinical school of the Jewish Theological Seminary.

My life changed completely. As a rabbi I found a combination of everything I wanted to do in life — teach, do social work, and live and guide others to live a meaningful Jewish life.

The Judaism to which I have returned is not the Judaism of my grandparents or great-grandparents; it has been utterly transformed by the milieu in which we live on this continent. The Judaism that I live and teach, based strongly in the traditions of the past, is one I have come to by convictions. It is a viable, vibrant, valuefilled, living Jewish tradition, age-old in its roots but very much of this world and this time in its application.

With the opportunity presenting itself in 1976, my wife and I, together with our three children, chose to come to Western Canada. Though we no longer have the conveniences of living in a more Jewish milieu, such as New York City and New Jersy, I feel as strongly as ever that nothing is impossible, if we set our priorities and want it badly enough.

With the influx of Jews from other parts of Canada and the world, we are now a Jewish community in transition. We have the opportunity in Alberta — a multicultural, multiethnic, multireligious community — to live meaningful Jewish lives as part of the greater Canadian community.

SALEEM A. GANAM

A DEVOTEES REFLECTIONS ON THE ISLAMIC TRADITION

It is significant that I should be speaking to you now, for today is a momentus occasion: the world has entered the year 1401 according to the Islamic Hijra calendar. For the more than 950 million Muslims of the world, including over two hundred thousand in Canada, the dawn of this new century is a most overwhelming and inspiring event.

The Hijra calendar started with the migration of the Prophet Muhammad — peace and blessings be upon him — from the city of Mecca to the city of Medina, to build a just society for the whole of mankind. This great and historic event has a special meaning for Canadian Muslims, and as Canadian Muslims we can in no better way inaugurate the fifteenth century than by dedicating ourselves to working with our fellow Canadians to eliminate bigotry, ignorance, injustice, and conflict from Canadian society.

On this auspicious occasion I urge my fellow Canadians, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, to strive together following the message of God, to combat hatred, mistrust, and the rapid corrosion of moral and spiritual values which is weakening our family and national bonds. May the mistrust and misunderstanding between people cease, and may goodwill and true understanding prevail in the fifteenth century, Hijra.

I have been asked to speak on Islamic traditions in transition in Western Canada. First let me say that "Islam" is an Arabic word meaning "peace". There is no word more beautiful in the human vocabulary. Every human being longs for peace. Peace can truly be found in Islam. Today, a question being asked with ever increasing earnestness is, "What is Islam, and what effect is Islam going to have upon religious traditions in Canada?" Canadians are rightly concerned in asking this question, given the condition of unrest in the world.

Muslim Immigration

I would like at this time to remind you that Islam is not new on the Canadian scene. Muslims began to emigrate to Canada from the Near East and other parts of the Muslim world in the latter part of the nineteenth century. An Islamic presence is recorded in Ontario in the census of 1860, while in Alberta and Saskatchewan the Islamic presence predates the founding of the provinces. The early arrivals lived in groups and succeeded in preserving their identity, language, culture, and religion. The Muslim communities in Edmonton, Alberta, and in London, Ontario, are two of the more significant early groups.

In 1938, the Muslims in Edmonton felt a growing need to have a place of their own in which to worship. Though few in number they had growing families, and it was imperative that they preserve and maintain their religious and cultural heritage. That same year they built the Al Rashid Mosque — the first mosque in Canada — here in Edmonton. Al Rashid has continued to be a centre focusing on the religious, cultural, and social life of the community. We are proud of this small group who were pioneers in developing this great nation and province.

After World War II, Muslim immigrants began to arrive in Canada in significant numbers. The Muslim community today is comprised of immigrants, native born Muslim Canadians, and converts, though in differing ratios for all three categories. Anyone visiting a mosque in Canada will be convinced that Islam is a United Nations unto itself, because Islam knows no color or racial bars. All mankind is equal in the sight of God.

It is important that Canadians know more about Islam, its culture, and its traditions, for in the absence of a true and honest picture of others' beliefs and conceptions, sterotyped ideas prevail. A tolerant and honest understanding of religions other than one's own is no less important than any other aspect of mutual understanding in our small world.

It is imperitive that, in seeking to understand various religious traditions, we obtain first-hand information from adherents of those respective faiths, especially when we are dealing with religious faiths that are a living force and a vital factor in humanizing the lives of billions of men and women. It has always struck me as being inconsistent with Canadian traditions to seek information from other than authentic sources. The history of Islam has been for so long misread it is not surprising to find Canadians still misreading it.

Islamic Fundamentals

Let me give a capsulized view of Islam. According to Islam, God has given guidance to all mankind throughout the ages. Wherever people live, even in the remotest parts of the earth, divinely appointed messengers were sent to guide them to good, to avoid evil, and to believe in one God, their creator. For some reason these different and scattered people lost the message after a few generations, and what remained became perverted and distorted. This messengership continued until A.D. 570. It ended with the Prophet Muhammad, and the Holy Qur'an became the final revelation from God.

In the Holy Qur'an we have a full recapitulation of all previously revealed scriptures. Islam is thus a religion which is for modern man complete and all-embracing. The Holy Qur'an provides guidance in all walks of life, private and social, material and moral, cultural and legal, economic and political. It provides a motivation to good actions and gives rise to scientific progress and technological advancement.

The revelational guidance provided by the Holy Qur'an enables and encourages man to expore God's creation and to understand more fully his own nature and purpose in life. Rather than merely speculating, the Holy Qur'an appeals to man's rational faculty and gives him the means to arrive at the concept of the One God: a master mind, a master engineer, and a master creator. It encourages man to anchor his basic thinking, or process of deduction, on immediate evidence upon which God has placed his seal of perfection. The guidance of God, as it unfolds with greater meaning, increases our perception of our surroundings and purpose in life.

Islam in Canada

Canadian Muslims, the majority of whom have immigrated here from foreign lands, are being forced to look outwards because of their new environment, new challenges, and changing situations. We recognize that this change is a reality and therefore must understand this process of change, why it is taking place, and how it will effect our Islamic perception of life. We have to examine and understand the full potential of our Islamic values and learn how these values are to be handed to our children and to our fellow Canadians.

We are faced with a culture and a way of life which is at variance with Islamic traditions. However, these obstacles do not cause a Muslim to lose faith; rather, they provide a challenge and an opportunity to bear testimony and to vitalize our Islamic heritage and way of life. Consequently, the community should help provide conditions where the individual Muslim can actualize his intellectual and moral possibilities to serve Allah better. On the social level, communal efforts should develop institutions where worship of Allah can be better manifested — educational institutions as well as mosques. It must not be forgotten that Allah demands communal worship, for it is this kind of worship that is a visible expression of the existence of the community.

Though the Muslim community is intended to be one single community, identified by adherence to the Qur'an and the *sunnah* (standard of behavior) of the Prophet, in reality it is now separated by national and geographical barriers. Nevertheless, as members of the community all Muslims are brothers and sisters and constitute a unity. It is a brotherhood transcending race, language, political institutions, national borders, and economic disparities.

While the Canadian community of Muslims is a part of the universal community, it is also a part of this great city and country. As such, it must exert special efforts to raise its educational example of a community that much remembers God — and all that this remembrance implies. It must not isolate itself from the world in general, for this is both impossible and impractical. Actually, God states that Muslims are part of a world community and that he has created various other nations in order that they may learn from each other. He says in the Holy Qur'an: "O mankind! Truly, We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that you may know one another. Truly, the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct" (49:13). This means that although the Muslim community is a distinct community it is continually interacting with the rest of mankind. In matters of science, technology, and culture, they are many things that can be learned from others. Moreover, Muslims live with other people, and many projects for the good of all demand cooperative efforts on the part of all sectors of society.

However, it is in the religious and moral sphere that the Muslim community must set itself as an example, that others may learn from it. Thus the Muslim community in Canada has a distinct role. If its members exemplify Islamic virtues well, avoid vices, are law-abiding, show respect and love for each other, systematize *zakat* (alms-giving), cooperate in the different aspects of social life while avoiding dissensions, show that they are one on fundamental issues, and play an important role in the progress of the city and community while keeping a high degree of spirituality, then others will be led to recognize what is good in the Muslim community and will desire to join it by becoming Muslims. Then the Muslim community in Canada would be performing one of its most important functions.

Canadian Muslims must therefore examine and define their attitudes so as to reflect the totality of Islamic traditions and the adeptness that Islam has commanded in its long and varied history. During the past fourteen hundred years, Muslims have been adept at fusing the best of foreign cultural elements with the spirit of Islam and thereby giving this spirit to the world. Now this spirit to face the challenge of the future must be implanted in the hearts of the new generation of Muslims in Canada.

There are encouraging signs throughout the Islamic world that Muslims are determined to face a changing world and are prepared to grapple with it realistically. We hope that a new generation of Muslim scholars, after acquiring the necessary discipline, will promote Islamic attitudes which will quicken this acceptance of change. In Canada, Muslims are aware of the need for change, but a change which in no way alters the supreme Islamic values: moral and ethical principles, family and home, and good relations among all people and nations. As

Canadian Muslims we reach out in friendship to fellow Canadians of all faiths and ask that a greater understanding of Islam be encouraged.

The Holy Qur'an demands this of us, but it also demands that when we enter into a dialogue with Christians and Jews, we do so in the best possible manner: "Call (all) to the Way of thy Lord, with Wisdom and beautiful preaching and reason with them in ways that are best" (The Holy Qur'an, 16:125). Again, "Let there be no compulsion in Religion, Truth stands out clear from error . . ." (The Holy Qur'an, 2:256). Our attitude and our conduct in relation to all of humanity are defined, and they must be in harmony with the principles of the Holy Qur'an.

Canadian obstacles to faith

Many areas in Canadian society are in conflict with Islamic religious, moral, spiritual, and ethical standards. Prayers, for instance, are to be performed five times a day, at specified periods. Many cannot do this because of the nature of their occupations and, in many cases, the unwillingness of the employers to make allowances. Thus a certain degree of latitude in timing must be taken advantage of. On Fridays, noon prayers are said in congregation. With only a short lunch break, insufficient time is available for many to attend. This is viewed by many as discrimination.

Another area that causes much difficulty and concern is the Islamic dietary laws concerning food and drink. Muslims are prohibited from eating pork or pork products. Many Muslims avoid eating in restaurants or fast-food outlets because of the uncertainty as to ingredients in prepared foods. Many bake their own bread and pastry to avoid the possibility of bakeries using lard in these products. Some products have specific ingredients listed on the label, but others have ambiguous information such as: vegetable oils, shortening, and/or lard.

The use of alcohol and drugs, which is socially acceptable in Canadian society, is prohibited in Islam. Muslims frequently are ridiculed if they don't drink; some fail to receive promotions because they are not considered sociable by management.

A third area of grave concern is education. Muslims believe in strong family ties, but Muslim children are exposed to a system of education with moral and social values which are in direct conflict with Islam. Sexual promiscuity, premarital sex, the providing of contraceptives to the young, abortion, and liquor and drugs all form a part of the school scene; all are in direct contravention of Islamic moral, social, and ethical values. Muslims categorically reject these evils in both theory and practice.

The Islamic nation

Islam has always engendered a certain element of fear among non-adherents. The reasons are many and varied, but the principal one appears to be that Islam, in its initial stage, spread with such shocking force and was so readily accepted by millions that it created fear among leaders and nations — particularly in Europe. Unfamiliar with Islam and its beliefs, they saw it as a force confronting Christianity and posing a threat to their power and existence. This fear gave rise to the Crusades.

For a thousand years Islam was unparalleled in world power and affluence, producing a rich culture and high civilization. For a thousand years it continued to be viewed as a challenge to Europe and its rulers. The result was that dozens of Crusades were sent against Islam, to no avail. It was only in later years that Christendom was successful in arresting the expansion of the Islamic nation.

In the last two centuries, with the increase in military power and colonial aspirations of European nations, the Islamic nation has become fragmented and suffered alien rule. Even in this abject condition of fragmentation, Islam has continued to spread. Today it is the second largest religious denomination in the world. Islamic communities and centres can be found in every nation. The present world population of Muslims is in excess of 950 million.

Professor Robert L. Gulick, Jr., Dean of the Thunderbird Graduate School of International Management in Glendale, Arizona, writing in a recent issue of the magazine *World Order*, says "The history of Islam has been for so long misread that it is not surprising to find Westerners still misreading it." Islam continues to be the least understood of all religions. The misunderstanding, and the fear and mistrust that is engendered by it, can only be eliminated through education and a better understanding of each others' faith and beliefs.

VASYL' BALAN

LIVING THE ORTHODOX WAY

> O heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of truth,
> who are in all places and fillest all things;
> Treasury of good things and Giver of life;
> come and take up Thine abode in us, and
> cleanse us from every stain, and save our souls,
> O good One.
>
> – Prayer to the Holy Spirit[1]

In his book, *The Orthodox Way*, Archimandrite Kallistos Ware states there is only one means of discovering the true nature of Christianity: we must step out onto this path, commit ourselves to this way of life, and then we shall begin to see for ourselves. The final decision to step out is a very personal one and possibly the most important choice we face. Six years ago I made this choice. Since then my path has taken me around sharp curves and up steep inclines; it has also taken me through some of the most beautiful moments imaginable. My faith has given a new meaning to life and an exciting vision for which to strive. I would like to share some of my experiences and how I now understand the Christian life in the context of my family and the Ukrainian Eastern Orthodox community where we belong.

A common tendency is to think of Christianity strictly in terms of the institution of the church. As an institution the Eastern Orthodox church began with the Pentecost, was given its form by the seven ecumenical councils, and grew into maturity as the nations of Byzantium and Eastern Europe accepted it and made it part of their respective cultures. However, the living church is best described as that path which leads us to better understand spiritual truths. Hence, Orthodoxy as a way of life is the body of Christ made living by the infusion of the Holy Spirit; for the members in that body the primary aim is *theosis*, or deification, which means union with God. Knowledge of the history and the holy traditions of the church is important, but this knowledge is not an end in itself. Instead, the Orthodox church must be regarded as the vehicle which guides the faithful toward the one goal of an eternal relationship with the living God. Around A.D. 150 the early church father, Clement of Rome, wrote in his Second Letter to the Corinthians (14:2):

> I presume that you are not ignorant of the fact that the living Church is the body of Christ . . . Moreover, the Books and the Apostles declare that the Church belongs not to the Present, but has existed from the beginning. She was spiritual just as was our Jesus; but He was manifested in the last days so that He might save us. And the Church, being spiritual, was manifested in the flesh of Christ.[2]

Beginning the Journey

I grew up with the perception of Orthodoxy as intellectualized doctrine, connected and interwoven by two thousand years of political events, and so metaphysical that it took specially trained theologians to explain its mysteries. As a Ukrainian I was conscious of the church, as the centre of an ethnic community, being burdened with the task of linguistic and cultural retention.

From an early age I developed a love for community involvement, and in time my ambitions were directed toward a career in political life. Our family parish provided ample opportunity to experience the pleasure of politics, and for twelve years I rose through the ranks of leadership of the lay youth organization in our church. During my undergraduate years at the University of Toronto I broadened my involvement to include the Ukrainian students' movement, which was emerging nationwide as a potent force in community politics. The issues as defined by the church overlapped with those of secular organizations, and it seemed both logical to use both church and secular organizations to pursue solutions to the socio-cultural problems plaguing the community.

I left Toronto and moved to Winnipeg to do graduate work in political science at the University of Manitoba. At the end of my first year in graduate school I was elected president of the fifteen thousand member students' union. Though it disrupted my academic work, the position provided me with enough experience and visibility in community affairs that I became hungry for higher and more powerful positions. Following my term as students' union president I helped establish an advertising business, and in a few months I was managing the fledgling partnership. By the time Irka and I married — on my 25th birthday — I had elevated my commitment to politics even above our newly created family unit. I was flying high on a reputation as a student leader, an emerging Ukrainian activist, and finally, an enterprising businessman dedicated to making it financially.

Three months after marrying, I was invited by one of my closest friends to attend an Orthodox weekend retreat which was being held in a small community north of Winnipeg. Participating in a spiritual retreat did not

exactly fit my image as a budding politician; however, being a "open" person, I decided to attend for the sake of keeping on top of community issues.

On Friday evening the 25 participants gathered informally in the living and dining room area of the priest's residence. As the discussion moved towards religious themes I began to feel somewhat out of place. I had never heard people talk about Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit in a personal way. Quite frankly, seeing all the Bibles strewn around on the floor in front of me made me even more uncomfortable. Before long my discomfort had developed into a nauseous feeling, and shortly the sickness became physically overpowering. I stole away to the washroom, and while trying to induce vomiting to clear my system I suddenly found it difficult to breathe, as if something very powerful were choking me. The severity of my stomach cramps and the reality of the choking feeling frightened the death out of me, and for some reason all I could think of doing was to plead, "Jesus, please help me." Within seconds the whole episode passed, and I was back to normal again.

Not understanding what had happened, I quietly rejoined the group. Though no one noticed anything unusual about me, I felt very different inside. No longer did I feel uncomfortable when someone talked in a personal way about God or prayer. Actually, I was surprised that I began to accept these things in a positive manner. A peace pervaded my whole being, and I was able to participate, at least in a minimal way, by openly admitting and sharing some of the inner feelings that had been concealed by the public image I had created.

On Saturday and Sunday mornings we celebrated the Holy Liturgy. This was an opportunity for most of us to go to confession and communion. For the first time in all my years of attending church, I genuinely began to believe in the person of Jesus Christ.

During the Saturday afternoon session (conducted by Demetrius Nicoloudakis), a woman in her mid-thirties got up and went to the kitchen at the back of the hall. Two other women went with her. Ten or fifteen minutes later they came out of the kitchen, really excited about something. The older woman seemed to be limping, but as she came closer it was evident that something strange had happened. Later we learned that from her birth one of her legs had been shorter than the other. In the kitchen she had experienced a miraculous healing through prayer, and her leg had been extended to its normal length. She was limping now, because the heel of one shoe was now almost two inches longer than it should have been.

The retreat continued in an atmosphere of all-encompassing joy and happiness. Everyone experienced the presence of Jesus Christ and the healing love he has for each of us. That afternoon I came to realize my own insignificance and unworthiness. Humbly I asked God's forgiveness for all my sins, and by reaffirming the commitments made during my baptism 25 years before, I acknowledged Jesus Christ as the Son of God and my Savior. The next day, during the Liturgy, I experienced the release of the Holy Spirit into my life. I felt a new joy and happiness in the knowledge that God cared for me in a personal way and that by his love I was free. Before leaving the retreat I dedicated the rest of my life to serving Jesus Christ as my Lord. That decision was the turning point of my life.

Following the narrow path

If I had to describe the effect my new relationship to Jesus Christ has had on my life, I would honestly say it has made being a Christian an exciting experience and a fulfilling way of life. This does not mean that I now lead a carefree life without problems. On the contrary, problems are continuously surfacing, but now I treat each one as a test of my faith and an opportunity to witness to the glory of God.

The excitement began when I returned home. Several months later, when my wife overcame her fears of my new Christian enthusiasm and abandoned all thoughts of leaving me, we began to redefine our marital relationship. As I learned to be less dogmatic and judgemental, our relationship deepened and matured. Our struggle over the past six years has been to bring into line the many interests which formerly dominated our lives. In the process we have experienced different aspects of Christian growth. The Apostle Paul teaches us the basis of Christian living: "Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks to all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (I Thess. 5:16-18). We have tried to make this the foundation of our family life. We have learned to pray together, to understand the importance of forgiveness in disagreements, and to seek the Lord's leading in the directions we choose.

Furthermore, I have learned to turn other areas of my life over to Christ. I was eager to commit our business to him. Almost from its inception it had been plagued with cash-flow problems. In the back of my mind I was hoping that my new Christian faith would result in an immediate solution to our mounting financial pressures. However, instead of providing quick solutions and instant financial success, God taught us to become totally dependent on him and faithful in his ways. When we were forced to close the business and incur large personal losses, I was able to understand the security of trusting God and to know the peace of mind that this trust can bring. Of the many lessons I learned, two were particularly practical. The first was to pray for all my needs, even those that seemed unrelated to Godly matters. The other was to share my problems with others, because it is by exposing our weaknesses and admitting our problems that others may encourage us or pray on our behalf. In

reality, Christ wants to help us carry our burdens. He extends an invitation to us; "Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28).

At the present time I am an employee of the federal government. As a civil servant I am familiar with the never-ending search for new economic, technological, and programatic solutions to our national problems. The world has its own wisdom and rationale. Scripture tells us to be in the world but not of the world. In other words, even though we live in a secular society, as Christians our approach to issues must be based on spiritual truths. The Orthodox church teaches us how to live in the Spirit and calls us to continually renew our faith in the Gospel through repentence, prayer, fasting, and the life-giving sacrament of the Eucharist. These are the basic elements of Christian life. Without them, the church will not be able to withstand the forces of secularism and materialism, which fuel apathy, self-indulgence, and cynicism, and which ultimately lead to destruction. The Apostle Matthew warns us not to be deceived by worldly values: "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up your treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consume and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will be your heart also" (Matt. 6:19-21).

Knowing the signposts

My attitude toward my own church changed rather profoundly. No longer was I preoccupied with administrative and political questions. Beyond the superficial level of the institution I experienced the reality of belonging to the living body of Christ. The Holy Scriptures, the writings of the Early Fathers, the ecumenical councils, the iconography, the gifts of the Holy Spirit — these used to be metaphysical and mysterious concepts which made Orthodoxy incomprehensible. Now they have become very personal vehicles leading to understand God better, which is the path of theosis, union with him. With the complexity and diversity of issues confronting us, it is easy to lose sight of the need for the continuous struggle of submitting to the Spirit and controlling our worldly desires. However, Christ tells us that once we accept this truth personally even our material needs will be provided: "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and all these things shall be yours as well" (Matt. 4:33).

Moreover, I have come to realize that the Ukrainian heritage is rooted in the spirituality of the church, and that without the spiritual context, the traditions become hollow forms — extensions of stage performances. For the secular mind these traditions are interesting, and many attempt to find ways to retain them for their historical and cultural value. However, for those renewed in the Spirit these same rituals come alive, adding a whole new dimension to the way we worship. What purpose could possibly be served by people gathering to picnic in a cemetery where loved ones are buried? Yet on the celebration of the Pentecost, *Zeleni Sviata*, the practice in western Ukraine was to assemble in the cemetery after the Holy Liturgy. Each grave was decorated to resemble a banquet table, covered first by an embroidered cloth, then furnished with place settings of fruits and breads. As the families stood by the graves, the priest walked amidst the crosses, blessing each one with holy water. The faithful broke bread and shared their fruits with friends and neighbors, requesting their prayers for the departed. Rituals such as Zeleni Sviata cannot be performed year after year, for centuries, solely for the sake of retaining culture. When traditions become divorced from their spiritual source they become impersonal, and in time they either die out or evolve into an artificial and sterile museum culture. For a culture to survive it must be lived; to live it one must believe and participate in its spirituality.

Overcoming the ruts that lead into the ditch

As a Ukrainian I have had to deal with these questions as they relate to the community to which I belong. From a historical point of view, one can draw many parallels between Ukrainian pioneers and first-century Christians. The pioneers were poor. Most derived their strength and enrichment from their faith, which served as the foundation of their lives. They greeted one another with, "glory to Jesus Christ!" At Christmas the greeting changed to "Christ is born, glorify him!" During Easter it became "Christ is risen, indeed he is!" They were still living in mud huts when they built their first churches with the characteristic onion-shaped domes. Today many frown when they hear the phrase, "a Christ-centered life," and yet this life was reality for the first Ukrainian immigrants.

Over time their spiritual bedrock was buried by the sediments of humanistic ideologies that emerged from within the community, ideologies advocating self-reliance, material and economic success, and freedom through independence. The church was disarmed as it struggled to become a dominant institution leading a secular community.

We are now removed but three to five generations from our pioneer ancestors. In that short time we have watched moths and rust consume our treasures and erode our inheritance. We are surrounded by evidence of inability to cope with language, culture, administration, and the development of good and loving relations. These conditions are the symptoms of the spiritual crisis we face. We will never resolve the crisis if the gospel of hate that has spread throughout the community is allowed to continue unchecked. Christ teaches us: "Love your

enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5:45).

There are many historical reasons why certain feelings abound nationwide as they now do, but there is no Christian, Orthodox justification for the hatreds which have been propogated. Our flagrant disobedience to Christ's commandment has put us in an adulterous relationship to God. Today we are reaping a grim harvest of bondage to guilt and the suffering of sickness and pain. We are engulfed in pettiness, bickering, and a general fear of revealing and speaking the truth.

The Old Testament provides us with countless examples of God's people turning away from him, and the widespread grief that resulted. Beneath the surface of cordial relations ferment deeply-rooted grievances between the two largest Ukrainian denominations. Within each of them exist many divisions and tensions. Hate cannot be controlled, and what began as hate toward another nation has now spread internally and is destroying us from within. The tragedy is that we have been deceived into expending all our energies debating complex and peripheral issues while the real enemy has been making tremendous inroads into our community. Not only are the new sects and fringe groups full with our people, but as part of the effort to revive our culture some are popularizing occult practices of our ancient folk beliefs.

The time for great change has come. In eight years we will be celebrating the millenium of Christianity in the Ukraine. This is not the time to get bogged down with insoluble academic debates about the history of our institutions. Instead we must focus on the Gospel's significance and meaning for all Ukrainians, wherever they may live. If we use this occasion truly to worship God and to glorify the Trinity, we will avoid the calamity which otherwise awaits us.

Returning to the path and completing the journey

I believe the Lord is calling us to the faith of the Early Fathers and the first Ukrainian pioneers. He is exposing our wrongs and toppling those religious institutions which operate strictly on secular principles. He is moving to prepare us for the coming turbulent times and persecutions. Through the Holy Spirit he is calling people to repent, to renew the church as the living body of Christ, and to re-establish a truly spiritual base for our community. The challenge is specifically aimed at each one of us. Where do we stand in our relationship to Christ? Are we prepared to make this relationship the basis of our life? If we sincerely desire to live the tradition and teachings that we have received, then we must experience Christ here and now. Renewal begins by reaffirming the commitments made during our baptism into the Kingdom of God. What does it mean for us to reject Satan and to accept Jesus Christ? Does the Holy Spirit make a difference in the way we live? If we take these matters seriously, are we willing to rethink our values and establish new priorities in our lives? The journey can begin only when we make the decision to take that first step. From that point on, Orthodoxy provides us with the directions and signposts which will guide us along the course.

The stakes are high and the alternatives have never been clearer. If we continue to deny God, we are not only jeopardizing our own salvation but are virtually ensuring that both the church and the Ukrainian community will wander aimlessly into the pages of history books. On the other hand, if we repond to God's call and commit our ways to him, we can be certain of a room in his mansion and a living Ukrainian Orthodox inheritance for our children.

In closing, I would like to share with you the following prayer to the catechumens which is offered to God during the Holy Liturgy:

> O Lord our God, who dwellest above and beholdest things below, who for the salvation of the human race, has sent forth Thine only-begotten Son and God, our Lord Jesus Christ: Look down upon Thy servants the Catechumens, who have bowed down their necks before Thee; and in fullness of time, make them worthy to receive the washing of regeneration, the remission of sins and the robe of incorruption. Unite them to thy Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, and number them among Thine elect flock: that together with us they may glorify Thine All-honourable name. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit now and forever, and unto ages of ages.
>
> Amen.

FOOTNOTES

1. Isabel Florence Hapgood, *The Service Book of the Holy Orthodox- Catholic Apostolic Church*, (Engelwood, New Jersey: Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archidiocese of New York and all North America, 1975), p. 67.

2. William A. Uurgens, Editor, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, Volume I, (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1970), p. 42.

J. FRANK HENDERSON

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC TRADITION IN TRANSITION

The title of this series of talks, "Traditions in Transition," certainly describes the state of the Roman Catholic church at the present time. To some the rapidity and direction of this change are disturbing and threatening; many others (and I count myself among them) find the present period exciting and liberating.

The renewal that is transforming my church can to a considerable extent be related to the name "Roman Catholic" itself. "Catholic" of course means "universal" or "worldwide", but it is actually more than just a geographical term: it includes a serious regard for the church's two thousand year history and for the additional period of biblical Judaism out of which it arose. It refers also to an appreciation for the created world, for the human being in its wholeness, and for humanity in all its diversity.

In contrast, "Roman" refers to a particular culture, one associated first of all with a certain city and empire which had its own individual history, language, and way of thinking. In a broader sense, "Roman" implies classical Western European culture as a whole. Canada, of course, represents one transplanted branch of this culture.

There always had been and always will be some tension between the notions of universality and of particularity represented by the name "Roman Catholic", yet I value them both and firmly believe that both should be promoted together. How each concept is expressed in concrete terms, the kind of balance that is maintained between them, and the way that unity is achieved in the face of apparently conflicting values have varied considerably over the centuries. I believe that the present renewal in the church is based to a large extent on a rethinking of the meanings of "Roman" and "catholic" and how each should be expressed today, and also on a shift in the balance between the values of universality and particularity.

We are emerging from a period in which both "catholic" and "Roman" were conceived of in somewhat narrow terms, one in which there was rather more emphasis on particularity — Romanness — than on universality, and one in which unity was achieved mostly through uniformity. Let me give just a few examples. The cultural base of Roman Catholic Christianity was that of late classical Western Europe, as filtered through the late Middle Ages. This culture emphasized the universal, the abstract, and the permanent. Historical vision was focused on in this particular period of Church history, and the scholastic theology of that age was predominant. Thus when missionaries evangelized Asia and Africa, they took with them this particularly Western European expression of Christianity and imposed it locally, without any regard for the local Asian or African cultures. Hence we find Gothic churches all around the world.

Narrowness had also affected the self-understanding of the church as church: it was thought of mostly as an institution or sacred society in which the bishops and priests were the only truly active members. In addition, symbols were reduced to a minimum: the water of baptism was often reduced to a few drops, oil was dabbed on and immediately wiped off, bread was reduced to a small round wafer that did not look like bread at all. Finally, to mention just two more points, human beings were not really appreciated in their wholeness, and God tended (at least in some respects) to be very transcendental and approachable only in certain ways.

Today the study of history allows us to understand how these somewhat narrow conceptions of "Roman" and of "catholic" came to be, and for the most part we can appreciate that the people of the period we are talking about had good intentions and were doing the best they could. Nevertheless, from our present vantage point, with a better and broader knowledge of history, and living in a rather different world, it is possible to see that both basic concepts "universality" and "particularity" need to be broadened and better balanced. That is precisely what is happening today.

In terms of catholicity and universality, the church now is being viewed not just as an institution, but also, simultaneously, as a pilgrim people, a community, a revelation of Christ, an evangelizer, and a servant to the world. Furthermore, all its members are called on to take an equally active role in its mission. Historically, the whole of Christian tradition is being taken into account, and much more emphasis is being placed on our roots in the biblical period and in the early centuries of Christianity. Advances in psychology, sociology, and anthropology also help to take into account and respect the human person in its wholeness, unifying body, intellect, feelings, and so on. In theology a number of distinct schools of thought are flourishing, and God is experienced not only as transcendental, but also very much imminent — here with us in our daily lives. Symbols are more and more authentic: water is splashed, oil is poured, bread is broken and really eaten, and wine is drunk. Indeed, the whole realm of the non-verbal is being allowed fuller expression.

To turn now to the dimension of Romanness or particularity, it is being appreciated that Western European culture itself has changed and become more concerned with process and development, with the particular and with differences, and with probability. Furthermore, both intellectual and lived expressions of Christianity are taking this into account. Within the general Western European cultural orbit, regional differences are beginning to be discerned and appreciated. Canada is not the same as the United States or England or Italy, and even

Western Canada is not exactly the same as Ontario or the Atlantic provinces. Thus the way in which Roman Catholic Christianity is expressed and lived here is not exactly the same as it is elsewhere, and this degree of particularity is seen as legitimate and desirable. But while the European or European-derived churches are becoming more expressive of their cultures, the African, Indian, Chinese, and other local churches also need to arise out of and express their own cultures. This process is slowly beginning to occur.

In addition, the previous emphasis on a worldwide institution run from Rome is being balanced by emphasis on the authority of the churches of each country, and of the dioceses — small geographic regions led by a bishop — within each country. Even within these dioceses (which still tend to be too large) it is appreciated that groupings of really human size are also necessary. Some suggest clusters of no more than ten families as ideal, with each parish composed of about ten such groups. Finally, the individual Christian is being appreciated not just as a statistic, but as important — if not essential — as the basis for the full growth and expression of the church because of the gifts which he or she has received from God.

This transition to a state of greater particularity and of greater catholicity is by no means fully accomplished; in fact, it is at a very early stage of development. Not all Roman Catholics accept the value of this process, and some are doing all they can to stop it. There is no question that it is risky and very challenging; it is not very clear exactly where this process is leading and what the church will look like in the future. It is also not very clear how visible unity — which is of great value for Roman Catholics — will be maintained. Obviously this will have to be achieved in some new way.

In reflecting on the current situation in the Roman Catholic church, I find it useful to reread the stories told of the people of Israel in the early chapters of the book of Deuteronomy. Having received the Torah at Sinai, they settled down for forty years and enjoyed God's precious gift to his people. They also became rather comfortable. But one day God told Moses that they had been there long enough and that it was time to move on because God had other good things in store for them. Not all the people were enthusiastic about moving on, and when the pilgrim people did get going they did a certain amount of wandering around and met a number of obstacles and challenges. Some of these they confronted and overcame and some they had to detour around. In still other situations they rejected God's direction and got into all kinds of trouble. At one point they simply traveled around in a circle for three years, but God finally gave them a clear signal to go north, towards the Land of Israel and Jerusalem.

I believe that the Roman Catholic church is entering into a similar desert pilgrimage and that a similar degree of trust, a similar amount of wandering, and a similar faithfulness in following God's somewhat subtle clues is called for. Though I sometimes get "cold feet", I do believe that this pilgrimage is God's will for this people at the present time. Mostly I find it exciting.

REV. GLEN JOHNSON

THE PROTESTANT TRADITION IN WESTERN CANADA

It is my responsibility to reflect, if ever so briefly, on my experience within the Protestant tradition and to relate that in some way to the church in Western Canada. It's going to have to be my experience within the Lutheran tradition, because I have no other experience to relate.

I grew up in a congregation in Saskatchewan. Besides those of German descent there were Norwegians, Swedes, and Danes. In this country there were at least three different Norwegian synods. The congregation in which I spent about ten years of my childhood was one of the pietistic congregations.

Our congregation used to have one whole week of special meetings during the summer months. During those meetings the laymen used to get up and give testimonies about their faith. There is a story told by one old layman who got up and said: "Ya, folks, I vant to give you a testimony tonight. I vant to tell you vhy I am a Lutheran, in three parts. In the first part, I'm a Lutheran by birth; I was born to be a Lutheran. Ya, ya. In the second part — this is far more important than the first part — I'm a Lutheran by choice. Oh ya, I chose to be Lutheran. Ya. And in the third part — which is far more important than the first part and the second part — I am a Lutheran by conwiction. You see standin' here before you tonight a conwickted Lutheran."

The people of the Augsburg Confession

Let's begin with the Augsburg Confession, because the Lutheran people are the people of the Augsburg Confession. There is no other tradition quite like it, because no other tradition places such store in a confessional statement. We think of the Reformation in terms of Luther nailing the 95 thesis on the church door in Wittenberg, but if you want to understand the people of the Lutheran confession, you have to think in terms of the men who, on June 25, 1530, went to Charles V in Augsburg and presented the Augsburg Confession as the witness of their faith.

In the empire it was permissable only to be a Catholic Christian. If you were not a Catholic Christian, you were a heretic, and you really ought not live in the realm. You see, around 600 the emperor Julian defined what it meant to be a Catholic Christian, and his definition went all the way back to St. Ignatius, who said, "Wherever Christ is, there is the Catholic church." But the emperor Julian, following Theodotius, defined members of the Catholic faith as those who held to the apostolic discipline and the doctrine of the Gospel, as well as the creeds. Anyone who didn't hold to these was considered to be either insane or heretic. Luther was charged by Eck with being heretic and unfit to live in the realm because he was not a Catholic Christian — he did not hold to the Catholic faith.

When the reformers went to Augsburg in 1530, at the invitation of Charles V, they took with them their confession. With their confession they proclaimed to all men, particularly to Charles V, that they were Catholic Christians. They did not exclude the papal party, with which they were violently at odds. They did not say the members of the papal party were not Catholic Christians, even though they disagreed on the nature of the reforms to be adopted in the church. The reformers said they, along with the papal party, were Catholic Christians. Then they proceeded to define what a Catholic Christian was, what was essential for the Catholic church, and what was essential for the unity of the church. They defined the Catholic church as being wherever the faithful are gathered around word and sacrament. They also said it was essential for the unity of the church that there be agreement in the preaching of the gospel and in the administration of the sacrament, and they said on that basis they were Catholic Christians.

Do you realize that in 1530 there was essential agreement on the 21 articles they presented to the emperor? There was not agreement, of course, on the abuses that the evangelical Lutheran churches said they had corrected, but there was agreement on the fundamental articles of the faith. Political considerations prevailed, however, and the tragic schism was complete, and for 425 years the Roman Catholic church and the Lutheran church lived at odds with and condemned one another. You cannot understand the Protestant tradition or the Lutheran church without understanding and reflecting on the events surrounding the Augsburg Confession.

Those were the people of the Augsburg Confession, the people out of whose tradition we come, with all our sins and with our failure to understand and hear, as others have failed to understand and hear.

Lutheran cultural diversity

The Lutherans came to Western Canada from all over northern Europe, and they came for a variety of reasons. Between 1900 and 1920, two million people came into the West. Some of them came later as war refugees, but in the early immigration most really came for economic reasons, they came because of the promise of land.

My experience and the experience of Lutherans in this land is one of cultural diversity. My father's father was Norwegian, and my father's mother was a Swede. My mother's mother was a German, and my mother's father was a German who had a Polish name. I was baptized in a German-speaking church from the old Ohio synod. The first experience in worship that I can remember was in a congregation in the Missouri synod. I was confirmed in a Norwegian Lutheran congregation. My sisters and brothers are married to every form of Lutheran there is. So we have in the Lutheran tradition in this land an enormous cultural richness and variety.

The same cultural richness has provided enormous administrative and personal difficulties for the Lutheran church. To bring all these people from different cultural and language traditions into one church has been impossible. We're still three. There used to be about 100 synods in the U.S., and we have inherited not only some of their cultural but also their theological diversity.

In addition to the orthodox and the pietists, there were also the rationalists. My grandmother's brothers were all bachelors, and they were alcoholics. They left their sweethearts in the Old Land and came over. They remained bachelors all their lives and had nothing to do but drink in the lonely winter nights. But they were also thoroughgoing rationalists. They had been well taught. They were avid readers, and they read about the theory of evolution and the fact that it excluded the possibility of the existence of God. So we have a broad range not only of ethnic backgrounds but also philosophic attitudes making up the Lutheran mosaic.

Pastoral Concerns

We ought not think of this vast immigration to the West in isolation, because the immigration had come to the western U.S. prior to its coming to Canada. This was the last frontier, and the Norwegians, when they came to this land, considered themselves a part of a whole vast movement to America in 1843, and when their 100th anniversary was celebrated in 1943, the Scandinavians in Canada joined them as if there were no difference between countries.

We did not develop the pastoral ministry on our own, in our own land. We needed help, and we recruited help from the U.S. and from the European churches. By getting help for our responsibilities we developed an enormous dependency on the U.S., a dependency that is with us still. Lutherans in Canada haven't been able to talk to one another because of the varieties of dependencies we have on various U.S. church bodies. Because of the administrative dilemmas, often we can't find a common ground on which to stand. We're now in the process of dealing with that and becoming a Lutheran church with responsibilities for this land and its people.

Confrontation with other traditions

The Lutheran church in this country was preserved by its language. It was not subject to all outside currents, because its language and culture protected it. That lasted only a few decades, however, for the children began to speak English in school, and adults regularly used English as the language of commerce. Even though they spoke the English language in every other facet of life, they insisted on German or Norwegian in their worship services. Worshipping in their own tongue became a detriment.

One of the things that helped us come to the point where we were able to throw off the shackles of the old language was the radio. Our people started listening to the radio, and they heard several papal pronouncements — papal pronouncements from every cotton-picking evangelist in the world, telling them about the millenium that was coming, telling them all kinds of doctrines and thoughts that were completely foreign to their tradition. When one of our pastors moved into a town about 50 miles east of Edmonton, he had 50 baptisms in his first year. The people had been listening to the radio and had no instruction in the Norwegian language which would enable them to cope with the barrage of propaganda that they were receiving — propaganda which was opposed to their traditions and to their faith. So the impact of radio hastened the change of language.

We are facing a similar experience today with the triumphalism of the television shows. The Lutheran tradition, and other traditions related to the orthodox Catholic faith — Catholic Christians in the sense I have described — are subject to enormous propaganda today. We have a congregation in southern Alberta that just lost 25 members. They walked out. They came to their pastor and said: "We want to be rebaptized." He refused to rebaptize them, of course, and after consultation with one another they came to the conclusion that they were no longer Lutheran Christians. So they left the church and probably will wander now from one church to another to seek a new kind of experience.

Christians all over this land are subject to strange doctrines and strange proclamations, to a Christianity which, in the form of a national religion, now combines success and truth in such a manner that God is placed at the disposal of every person's request.

The Lutheran church, along with other traditions, faces an enormous challenge and enormous problems. We can no longer rely on our ethnic background. We can no longer rely on our language. The only thing we have left is our faith. The only thing we have left is our confessions. The challenge for our tradition and church is to become again a confessional and a confessing church. The challenge for our tradition and church is to reform

once again, according to our confession. The challenge for our tradition and church is to continue an intense dialogue over the next 50 years — because it will take that long — with our Roman Catholic brothers, because it is a confession of my tradition that we are Catholic Christians, that what is essential for the faith and what is essential for the unity of the church is that there be agreement in the preaching of the gospel and in the administration of the sacraments.

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